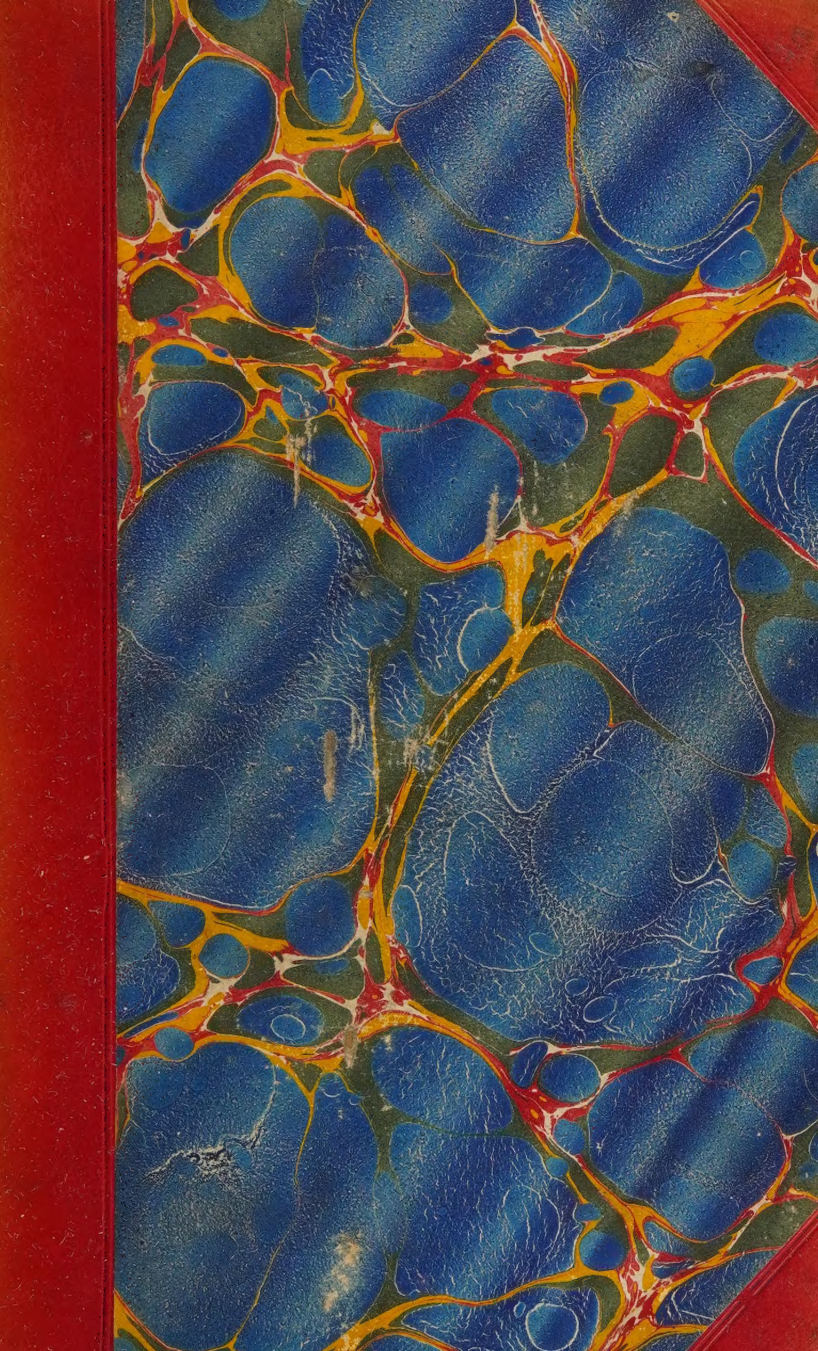

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THE

SMUGGLER;

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TALES BY THE O'HARA FAMILY," "THE DENOUNCED," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE SMUGGLER.

* * * * *

Mr. Linnock had called the party in the parlour "merry folk," because the loud laughter of Miss Eliza reached us as we stood at the garden-door; and when I took my place at the supper-table, I found that your brother still contrived to keep up her spirits. He and she made some good-humoured conjectures as to the cause of my absence; the one accusing me of a sonnet to the moon, to which my defence was, that there was no moon that evening; the other supposing a tender melancholy for me; and I think she meant a glance at the mysterious Lady Ellen, which, however, I gravely discountenanced. Mrs. Linnock did not appear at sup-

per, and Miss Linnock looked thoughtful and on the watch.

In about a quarter of an hour we heard the sound of wheels rolling in the yard. Miss Linnock jumped up, crying out, "Father!" and her sister more elegantly ejaculated "Papa! dear papa!" and both left the room in a joyous flurry, excellently well acted. Directly, I caught Mr. Linnock's voice, and that of his white-headed brother, loud in remonstrance, and surprise, and explanation; and with a— "Was ever the like heard of!" the two smugglers entered the parlour, followed by the young ladies and their mother. I kept my countenance very well during my presentation to Mr. Linnock and Farmer-Bob. Then followed our host's indignant tirade against the impudent dogs who had dared to commit an outrage upon gentlemen like us, and to use his house for their purposes; and his regret that we should have been so treated, and his honest hopes, however, that under the circumstances we had felt ourselves as comfortable as was possible; and his regrets again that he had been absent from home so long, and not on the spot when the smuggling rascals had deprived us of

our liberty; for they could not have humbugged him with a silly tale, as they had done in the case of other persons—(and here he looked reprehensively at his wife and daughters, who, bless them, were the very models of innocent consternation,)—no, nor bullied him neither; and he wondered to death, almost, how some people could be so easily imposed upon—and now that he and his brother *were* at home, at last——

"You will free us of those fellows, I hope?" interrupted Alexander. Mr. Linnock replied that he had done so already: the moment he saw them lurking about his gate, as he drove up to it with his brother in the one-horse chaise, he had asked their business, and not getting an answer that pleased him, called out his helpers from the stable and the cow-shed, and soon sent the scamps a-packing——

"Then, in fact, we are free men?" again asked your brother.—Certainly. Free to go where we pleased, that moment; only he hoped that we would do him the pleasure of staying till morning at least, or, for that matter, as long as we liked, for he would be most happy——

A third time Alexander interrupted him to

demand the favour of a horse and guide to his tower. I also requested similar accommodation. The whole family now besieged us with hospitable entreaties. We were immovable; and eventually, and in less than ten minutes after Mr. Linnock's return from London, we had mounted our borrowed horses, and begun to follow our guide, to the full satisfaction of those we parted from, notwithstanding their kind speeches. I venture to affirm that it was not long after our disappearance, by a convenient road, until the "good 'uns," already run in by the Miss Molly, were safely stowed away in places I knew something about.

At the edge of the fosse of his tower, I delivered your brother to his men, and understood from their words to him, that after searching and making inquiries in all directions, aided by fellow-officers along the coast, as well as by the civil authorities, they had entertained the most serious alarm for his safety.

Proceeding homeward, I found my father and Bessy in about the same state of uneasiness on my own account, notwithstanding that they had received a vague note, dated from no place, and free of all explanation, which I trusted to

the diplomatist of the smugglers for delivery to them, upon the first night of my loss of liberty:—the fellow would not engage to deliver one of a more satisfactory character, and bargained to get even that unsealed.

It was late, as you will suppose, when I arrived at home—past eleven o'clock. Yet my father and sister would sit up to hear a full account of my adventures. And I regretted this, for neither of them looked as well or as happy, or as spirited as they had done the last time I had seen them—but this is fresh ground, dear Richard, and I had better send you off the close of my smuggling story just as it is; so good bye.

THE journal again, Graves, after a heavy-hearted pause of some days, and I am only going to write what (as has happened before) must be laid by for you against a future day; ay, indeed; perhaps some such explanations as my suppressed scraps will supply, may be useful, yet.

I did not go to rest the first night after my escape from Lilly White's, with a tranquil spirit. My father and I were alone together for a few minutes, and he told me something to make me quarrel with my pillow. The Honourable George Allan had repeatedly appeared lounging about our house during my absence, and my father saw him once in our little back garden; and he absolutely knocked at our door that very morning, to inquire after Miss Mutford's health—insolent cur!—but no matter. My father feared that he might have fallen in with

Bessy on her walks, and she has been prohibited from going out alone, in future.

I bridled my rage—although it, and a stinging sense of shame, sent the blood to my cheeks—and asked my father how Bessy seemed to have taken his prohibition. He could not exactly say. He feared to harbour one disagreeable thought of his poor Bessy—(and here the tears fell from the old man's eyes)—yet he thought, or he suspected she had appeared to be embarrassed, and conscious, and perhaps a little sullen; but he might have been wrong—he was sure he was wrong. Had he ventured any indirect questions with her? No—not a breath. He would not lead her to think he doubted her, for worlds; and he commanded me to follow the same course. I promised nothing, for I could not bring myself to resolve upon implicit obedience. Bessy re-entered the room, and the subject ceased.

I talked of indifferent things, and kept my eye upon her: and whether by the contrivance of suspicion, which, quite as industriously as jealousy, bakes its own cake—(excuse the homely version of the Shakespearian adage)—or that there really were and are grounds for my con-

clusions, I did believe, Graves, that something new had entered into the spirit and the nature of my sister. An absorbing, agitating, selfish something, ay, and a something that she keeps from us, and is to keep from us—Great God! save me from my own horrid fears!—poverty and shame together—oh! that would be horrid, indeed!

So, little wonder that I had not a very good night's rest, Graves. But this was not the full cause of my vigils. Bessy retired to bed. I asked my father for—three pounds—for what purpose, you shall hear. I had calculated how long it was since Lucy Peat entered into our service; ascertained that we now owed her this sum, and I asked it, in order to pay her, the next morning, and send her out of the house. For my own part, there was not a shilling in my pocket.

Well. My father assured me that he could not spare me *one* pound. That very morning he too had been making his calculations; and found that we had scarce enough money in the house *to buy food* for the days that must elapse till he would be entitled to draw the quarterly interest of the little sum, (and yet, our only

earthly fortune,) placed in the hands of a London banker. I believe I was going to hint at the great necessity of the case for which I wanted the money, although it must have terribly shocked him ; when he added, that he could not even pay his rent, till the time mentioned : no, nor our servant-maid's wages ; and, in fact, she had asked him to settle with her, a few hours before I came home, and he was compelled to refuse her.

And thus, Graves, *I* am compelled to tolerate, under the same roof with my sister, a girl of tainted heart and mind, and one with whom Bessy has been on terms of too great confidence, I fear, and who has the ear of the Honourable George Allan, to my own certain knowledge. But it can't be helped ; and I have only to hold myself vigilant ; and vigilant I am, though I tremble in my office, dear Graves—ay, tremble.

The morning after this night, I got Bessy into a conversation about our memorable (accursed !) visit to Lord Lintern's. I reminded her, gaily, of her pity for the elder son, and her admiration of the personal graces, ay, and the manners too, of the younger. Her head was down, but I saw her colour come and go.

"Has he never blessed your bright eyes, since?" I continued.

"Why—yes—" she stammered, "has he not often rode or walked by the windows?"

"Have you seen him on any of *your* walks, Bessy?" I changed my tone, a little.

"Me? him?" she was confused, by heavens! "him, Michael? never! how could you think it? never, never, indeed! on my word, Michael, on my honour, on my soul!" and she clasped her hands, and looked up at me, trembling, weeping, and terrified. Hark you, Graves—and whenever you can read this, pity me—

By my mother's soul, I did not believe her!

NEXT day, she and I had a few words more, together; I told her what I had learned of the character of Lucy Peat, and was going on to warn her against all unnecessary intercourse with the girl, when she interrupted me, with staring eyes, and pale cheeks, crying, "Is that possible! oh, dear me, is that possible!" (here is one of Bessy's childish phrases for you, for, indeed, in experience—except it has very lately come to her,—in turn of mind, and almost in years, scarce sixteen, she *is* a child; and would to Heaven she were so in person!)—"Oh, Michael," she continued, "I wish you had known that sooner; oh, I wish *I* had known it sooner!"

And again, Graves, I arrived at a conclusion. She *had* made a confidant of Lucy Peat, or the wily girl had induced her into confidence,

(doubtless, for a good bribe;) and acting on this thought, perhaps too hastily—I resumed—

"Bessy, my love, you are frightened at my news."

"I am indeed, dear Michael!"

"Because, Bessy—" I took her hand—"now do not suppose I blame you much—because you have allowed Lucy to make free with you."

She wept and was silent; I went on.

"Because she has brought you messages, Bessy."

"Oh, yes, yes; I own it! but I never replied to them, Michael, not a single time; and I have bid her not to bring me any more, indeed I have; and it was wrong of me, very wrong, not to say all this before; but I feared to shock our dearest father, Michael, that was the only reason, believe me it was; and oh, Michael, do not tell him now! Pray do not, it would kill him, and me with him! Oh, mercies and goodness, what shall I, shall I do!"

She left the room suddenly.

Again, Graves, again, my only friend, I did not believe her!

Look at the thing in the face as I do. See all this fright and anguish, disproportioned to

the occasion: disproportioned to it, *if* she has at last been candid with me; *if* she hides nothing; *if* she has not answered his messages; *if* she has not met him! met him, often out of doors! under the eye of the world! And met *him!* that unfledged impertinence! that stolid sapling of aristocracy! he who dared to glare upon her innocent cheek—then, at least, innocent —till he kindled it into burning blushes, and wetted it with virgin tears—and in my presence —and she at my side—but as if I were not there—were not her protector—her brother—with better blood than his in my veins—and with a heart to—yes, Graves, to strike him dead, if he has given me cause, good and sufficient! We shall see.

YOUR brother and I see each other often. (I resume after a pause,) And I think he begins to acquire more knowledge of the service he is upon; ay, and suspect a little of the scene of our late adventures together, and of my candour, into the bargain. But he has said nothing openly or directly, nor, I believe, will he. A sense of fit and unfit, must doubtless form my excuse, in his eyes, and keep him silent.

"Harold," Graves:—Harold that was to be so soon, so very soon put into rehearsal—I have not heard a word about him since. But I suppose it will all come right, some day. Meantime I work with tolerable industry at small things, and send them to the periodicals: though, to tell the blessed truth, no one takes notice of them, either. Well; I can only work and wait.

And from working and waiting, a little trump

seems to turn up at last, sure enough. This morning I have another letter from the manager, assuring me that next Thursday week we are to have "Harold" in a first rehearsal; and I am to attend. It was not his fault, he says, that the matter has been delayed; but in fact he cannot control other people; and although the two great tragedians seemed highly pleased with their parts at first, and engaged to play them, they have since appeared a little shy of each other, occasionally, and could not be got to attend a rehearsal, together: now, however, they are in better humour, as, indeed they ought to be; "for," adds my managed manager, "you have balanced the power of the two men to a hair, Sir, each in his own different way, so as really to leave no cause of jealousy." The zany! I never thought of one or the other of his stars while writing my poor play; but I suppose I had better not say so, as it seems taken for granted that I was in duty bound to have done so.

And I got another letter along with the manager's, Graves. It comes from the editor of an obscure Magazine, to whom (as I *would* try every body) I sent "an article," about two

months ago; and (incredible news!) he *has* printed me, and actually enclosed three pounds, fifteen shillings and sixpence, for a matter some seventeen pages in length. And now, at last, pay Lucy Peat, and send her off. No, Graves —I must first pay her lover, Sam Geeson, in whose debt I am for a few bottles of smuggled French wine for my poor, drooping father—(he thinks it was in the house,)—and for sundry poached hares, rabbits, and pheasants! also craved by my father's weak state, (he will not allow himself even butcher's meat, at his own cost, and I lie to him solemnly that people of my acquaintance send us presents!) and if I had gone in debt for these things with a regular trader, they would cost me three times as much as I pay the young smuggler—and how could I discharge such a debt as that? And, by heavens! my father shall not want food, good and fit for him, while only a rich man's preserve is to be trenched on, or the King baffled of his wine-duty!

Ha, Graves! will you know something of me as you read this?—let me add, that I have been compelled to suffer Sam Geeson to sit at the kitchen fire with Lucy Peat, because I

could not pay him for his good things, nor pay Lucy her wages — Oh, Poverty! thou *art* vice!

Your brother is laughing heartily in the next room, as I write, amusing Bessy and my father; and I am to go with him and her to see and to enjoy the humours of the village fair to-morrow.

Two days after the fair———

And what an unjoyous, solid, rude, suffocating, deafening, head-ache-giving thing a fair in the country *is*:—(let me just except Greenwich fair, if Greenwich *be* in the country—or rather the accidental adjunct of the noble old park, and the freaks it irresistibly inspires.) The street of the little village stuffed with people who will walk over you if you do not push them about as they do you; girls scrambling on by themselves, and men and lads by themselves; and no one laughing, nor yet smiling, but on the contrary the greater number either half-scowling at one another, or else looking nervously shy of having it appear that they are such fools as to allow themselves to be pleased. Peep into one of the inns, of which all the lower rooms are flung open to genteelish company, among the rows of happy creatures

sitting on forms by the walls, drinking porter, or ale, or brandy and hot water, and nearly all look discontented still;—peep into a dancing booth, as you pass by, and you will see perhaps a dozen girls, exerting themselves to the utmost in a work-and-labour way, for the edification of three or four bumpkins, who walk from side to side among them with very disdainful faces, and now and then lift up their legs, and let them down again, one after another, as if they were plodding over a stubble field, or at best turning the tread-mill at slow time. And how I abhor that smock frock into the bargain! the most unpicturesque, unmanly, unlovely, sheep-faced piece of costume in the world. Ay, and the close-laced bumpkin buskins, too, which, from constant pressure, impoverish the most considerable muscles of the leg, and leave an English peasant the worst-limbed peasant I have yet seen.

And such are the general features of a village fair almost always presented to my eye; for I have nothing to do with the itinerant booth-shops of trinkets, knick-knacks, and gingerbread, nor with the wild-beast shows, nor the equestrians, nor the pig-faced lady, inasmuch

as they have nothing to do with the local characteristics of the company whom they delight;—or, at most, I shall allude to them only to say that the thumping of the big drums, and the harsh and rude clashing of the cymbals, and the screaming, or shrieking, or groaning of other instruments of noise—(of music, indeed!)—kept up on the platforms before each, stun my brain nearly to desperation.

But what has become of the power, or the will, or the zest for natural and innocent enjoyment of the villagers of Old England?—merry Old England it used to be, we are told—can I call it so, at present?—Why don't these hard-worked, simple-minded poor fellows, take delight in the few holidays left open to them?—for, as to Sunday, it has now become, to all outward appearance, the saddest day out of the seven. And, stop:—perhaps it is this very pharisaical observance of the sabbath, at first imposed upon them against their natures and wishes, and since grown into a sullen, sulky, habit, which at length incapacitates them from relishing even their annual play-days. At all events, Graves, you know my notions of old, as

to the good sense, good feeling, nay, good religion, of making it criminal in a poor man or lad, to sing a harmless song, play at quoits or cricket, or be seen dancing with his sweet-heart, or—if he and she like—his arm round her neck of a Sunday. None of those acts would be in themselves unholy, and therefore would not break the command for keeping holy the sabbath. Farther—I do sincerely believe that after due worship of God, or in the intervals of the different times set apart for His worship, on His own Day, a joyous and a contented heart giving vent, according to the common manifestations of human nature, to its joy and to its content, would not be odious in the sight of Him who loves his creatures with a surpassing love, and who has contrived a wondrous plan for even their earthly happiness. "There is joy in Heaven," where reigns an eternal sabbath;—and I *will* insist, that it was upon the first earthly sabbath day, after the "foundations of the earth were laid," and "the corner stone thereof," that "the morning stars praised Him together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!"

As to the good feeling and good sense of

compelling poor Johnny-raw to be triste and demure-looking upon the only day of the week that he is not bent double with labour, follow him for a good part of a Sunday, and draw your own conclusions. See him first, after church or chapel service, moping alone, or with a group of his own sex, at one side of the village street, or of a green field, while flocks of pretty, and (if they durst) merry-hearted girls, move in a somewhat more active manner, at the other side: see him thus, and you pity his lot,—(pray do not fall into the mistake of always quarrelling with him for stupidity.)—When he tires of his unenlivening lounge, stand near the Tap, and you will catch a glimpse of him, however, slipping into its ever-open or only-latched door, round a corner: and you do not greatly pity him now,—but how much *can* you blame him? —What are his means of enjoyment in the open air?—And, if he had some means of enjoyment in the open air, would he be in the tap—in it, at least, so often, or so long, at a time?—And—(take human nature as it is, as it has ever been, and as it ever must be)—which is the greater breach of the sabbath, dancing happily on the green sod, ay, and with one of

those nice village beauties before him, or spending his money on the heavy, stupifying national drink of England?—(Graves, have not the porter and the ale of England, the light wines or the light beer of France, and the whiskey of Ireland, a point of impression upon the very different characters of the three people?) And can his methodized avoidance of the cheery companionship of the other sex, openly, and in the face of heaven and of man, upon a sabbath day—to say nothing of his self-control in different matters—be much better, very often, than a system of demoralizing hypocrisy? Ask the parish overseer, and he may perhaps tell you that more seeds of care and trouble to him are sown of a Sunday evening,—(at all events of a Sunday night, take the seasons through)—than upon any other evening of the week. And does he, or do you expect it otherwise? I think, in my conscience, it is evident that the natural gallantry common to all men, gentle and simple, might, in seven cases out of ten, be diverted from concentrating itself into a downright breach of parish law, if it were allowed to evaporate, gradually, in the hundred harmless little courtesies which are matters of

course amongst men and women, lads and girls, in less disciplined communities. This, however, you will say, is rather a stretching of my theory,—very well. Give me back our fine merry Old England national character, among the lower orders, ay, and some of the middle, too, and that is what I want, and you may effect it as you like, and as you can. Make our smock-frocked compatriots look less unhappy, less jealous of a free-hearted, natural existence, less sulky while a charming girl of the same street and parish stops him, as he plods along, and almost by force detains him a few moments while she tries her very best to tell him pleasant stories and anecdotes, and to look up, laughing, into his face,—in fact—(inverted man that he is to suffer it!)—to court him. Let me finish my wandering chapter with a really serious sentence or two. Make your villagers enjoy their lives as their forefathers did theirs, or, at least, make them more moral than their forefathers were, as a set-off against their sad and sour pretensions to outward decorum. Convince them that—one thing with another—they have more facilities for happiness than the people of any second country under

the sun, and yet that—not in seeming, merely, but in downright fact, and in their hearts, and livers, brains, spleens, and gall-bladders,—they are the least joyous people under that same sun.

But, how am I employing my pen? You would scarce think, now, Graves, that, connected with this fair-day are occurrences waiting to be written down to you, which positively keep me restless, and, very probably, may influence my earthly life to come!—matters linked together by no less persons than the Honourable George Allen, his father, Bessy, your brother, and, saying nothing of myself, the recluse of the smuggler's fortress? 'Tis the fact though; so listen.——

You will not, however, till I inform you why, since my escape from Mr. Linnock, to the present moment, I have never before mentioned the name of that mysterious young lady: why I have not exerted myself to "find her out," as I so positively promised—though perhaps I *have*, and only kept the facts from you? No. And why not, then, a second time? I don't know. My interest in her did not cease, certainly; nay, I fear it continued absurdly strong: but, what could she *be* to me, I asked

myself? and the question arose the oftener that I had found other persons and things to occupy me at home: or perhaps I only postponed; or did the doubt of her sanity make me waver? And might not Mr. Linnock's high-mouthed words about some joint interests between her and me, and that other still more vague identity, "The Don," have been only pure invention, to irk me to strike his bargain with him? This I asked myself, also. However, do not rely on any thing I say upon the subject. I was incongruous, as usual; and that 's enough.

Bessy, your brother, and I went to the fair, as I told you was to be the case. During the short walk from our little village to the houses at the sea-side, where some of the sights and amusements of the day were to be had, we passed by a cricket-field.——

By the way, I am horribly of the Duchesse de Berri's mind on one point, and that *is* cricket; don't you remember that, at Dieppe, the other day, the English gentlemen visitors of the place paid her the honour of inviting her to witness their national game; and that she came to the ground, and sat in a beautiful pavilion; and that, directly, the play began;

and that she took no notice, but kept talking and laughing with her French attendants and eating sweet things; and that our countrymen marvelled thereat, and exerted themselves more and more to fix her attention, but all in vain; and that at last, however, she was seen to look grave and observant, and turn her eyes to the cricketers, upon which, much flattered, they worked so hard as to outdo, in energy and vivacity, all former cricketers; and that the Duchesse began to grow fidgety and seem impatient thereupon, and dispatched one of the gentlemen of her suite with some message to our fellow-countrymen; and that our fellow-countrymen thought they were going to hear a request, arising out of womanly nervousness and amiability, praying them not to exert themselves so very much, lest some of them might cause injury to the spine; and that, notwithstanding, when the message was delivered, it only contained her royal highness's wish to know how soon the English gentlemen proposed to give over their preliminary arrangements, and begin their game; and that, when they allowed her to understand they *had* been playing their game all the while,

the Duchesse de Berri left the ground, forthwith?

But, Bessy, your brother and I had to pass the more popular cricket-ground, here. Crowds of people stood at the white palings of the field, by which ran the raised foot-way of the road we were going; and inside the palings were finer folk, all delighted with the noble game, and all as grave, and as silent, and as proper, as if they had stopped there a moment to let a funeral go by. We stopped too, to gain our passing share of delights I observed in the field two fine young women, with a fashionable, but showy air, and with noses so long and of such an outline, as to set some vague recollections and associations at work in my mind. They were walking towards us, and nodding to some one on the road. I turned my head and saw the Honourable George Allen behind us, on horseback, so placed as to plant his eyes on Bessy's side-face. That instant his sisters—(now I had the family noses by heart)—came close to the palings, a few steps from where we stood, and one of them called him. He turned his horse's head over the paling, allowed his fore-feet to rest on the path, and began to converse with them. In this position, he was

between us and the sea-side houses; so that to pursue our walk, we must either have waited for him to leave the foot-path free, or else have descended from it, and walked round his horse, upon the road. I was not inclined to do this; first, because the young gentleman committed a breach of turnpike law to our inconvenience; secondly, because he committed a breach of ordinary good-manners, which it would have been unfriendly towards him not to notice; thirdly, because one of our party was a lady, who could not well be required to scramble her way among the line of stationary carriages on the road, merely for his gratification:—And think you, Graves, I had no other argument? Think you the renewed insolence of his stare at my sister, in my presence—to say nothing of your brother—touched me not a little? Think you I did not keenly feel the exquisite insult offered to her by his peculiar attentions? so peculiar, observe, as to permit her to be inconvenienced by his horse, at the moment that they pointed her out to the notice of the vulgar crowd, well-dressed and all, around us? And was I once more nothing, at my poor sister's side?—Let us see, I said.

My only difficulty was about *his* sisters, and

I thought I would wait one moment for their sakes. But after I had waited two, and that our way was still obstructed, and that we had been compelled to stand back from the fidgety hind-legs of his high-blooded steed, it struck me that I ought at least to say a word, in remonstrance; and so, I requested him, in an amiable manner, to have the goodness to allow us to pass on. He turned his head, as I spoke, but it was not to reply to me, nor to look at me, nor to do what I had asked, but to stare again at Bessy. His brilliant, long-nosed sisters also honoured her with a look, but did not ask their brother to oblige her and her friends. After this, I could not afford to lose another moment, even for them; and, anticipating Alexander, I believe, in something less courteous, I took off my hat to them, begging pardon; caught the horse by the bridle, backed him upon the road, and held him there till Bessy and your brother had walked by.

Did the Honourable George Allen try to disengage his horse's head from my hand? No such thing. While I was in the act of moving him about in his saddle at my pleasure, he resumed the heavy, stupid conversation with his

sisters which my request had interrupted, not even raising his cold-toned voice to make up for the distance he had been forced from them, and I pursued my way after Alexander and his charge, unquestioned, and—*that*, of course, was *his* triumph — unnoticed. But, for my own part, I can see little of a gentlemanly or a manly triumph in it. 'Tis the new way, I know, among some of our rising and just risen youth, to be as callous to the penalty inflicted on them for ill-manners, as they are to that old-fashioned sense of good manners, which hindered their fathers from putting on their rank only as plate-armour to protect vulgarity. "Did he learn all that at Oxford?" demanded Alexander, when I had joined him; "we could have done him as much good on quarter-deck."

But we had not yet bid adieu to the Honourable nor to his characteristics.

A carriage overtook and passed us ere we reached the sea-houses; I saw his sisters, and a cross-looking old gentleman in it, and he trotted after it. We arrived at a show of wild beasts, and went in to stare at them. The place was crowded, and almost the first party we met were the young Ladies Allen, their brother, and their

old friend. We were obliged to stand still behind them, while they contemplated the—(to me, affecting, though I don't perhaps clearly know why, or won't stop to explain)—curiosity of a fine lion and a little Italian greyhound at play, together. Bessy was much pleased with the sight, and, not recognizing our tormentors as soon as I did, smilingly whispered a hope that they would soon pass to another cage, and let us look our fill. I do not know if the Honourable George Allen heard her little voice; he turned round, however, while she spoke, and recommenced his system of annoyance; still consistent in not considering himself called on to show my sister any of the politeness due to an equal, at the moment that he flattered her with personal admiration; for, though he must have well understood—(even if he had not caught her words)—that he towered up between her and the sight she had stopped still to enjoy, he would not move a jot. Nay, whenever he did not turn his head to glare at her, he squared his shoulders and elbows to take up as much room as possible; and I even caught him objecting to a proposal of his sister's to change their subject of natural history.

I own my blood began to tingle; but, keeping a calm face, I only led Bessy by the side of him and his red-visaged, crusty-looking old companion, and stood with her directly before them. The Ladies Allen were left unincommoded by my movement; but they thought fit, however, to seem intruded upon, and they were moving away, when the old gentleman grumbled, and their brother said in Bessy's ear, "Oh, go in to him at once, my dear ——."

"Aha!" cried I to myself, "now, infidel, I have thee on the hip!"

Alexander did not overhear this gross as well as impertinent speech. When he observed Bessy's tears, I said she was only frightened at the tiger in the next cage. It was easy, however, to whisper to your brother, while the animals afterwards riveted her attention, what I wished him to know; and our measures were soon adjusted and as soon entered upon. He left me on the pretence of going to speak to a friend in the crowd.

I perceived that the Allens were leaving the exhibition, and that he followed them closely. In a few minutes he was at my side, and said, still in a whisper, "Not as great a scamp as we

thought; as soon as I gave him our cards, he said he would return and apologize directly, but that he had to see his own sisters to their carriage, and he would call at my tower and do what we ask within an hour."

We went home, and there leaving Bessy repaired to the tower, to be ready for the young Honourable. We waited the hour; he did not appear. Another and another, with like success. I shared Alexander's mutton and bottle; we were still left to wait. The affair had occurred at three o'clock in the day; it was now eight in the evening; and I asked your brother if our young friend could have quite missed in his reading the improving story of Mahomet and the Mountain? He thought it likely, but saw no reason why he might not have the practical benefit of it, notwithstanding. We walked down to the village, found Master Fox disengaged, though hallooing for customers, standing up on the driving-seat of his fly, and in a short time afterwards Polly and Harrit halted us before the mansion of Lord Lintern.

As, in truth, the staid face of the Honourable George Allen proposed a question—(like

Mas'r Fox's own, though not to such an extent) —as to his precise age,—that is, it might be seventeen or two or three and twenty, just as his parish register should happen to decide,— we had been slightly discussing the probability of how far he was an accountable person in such matters, while on our way to his father's house. It struck me that our intelligent charioteer had before now mentioned to me his having been at college. I questioned Master Fox upon the fact, and if he was to be depended upon, our doubts were removed; for he not only admitted indeed having supplied me previously with the information, but now insisted on its correctness.

Thus armed—(though to own the truth not thus alone, for with a view to the possibility of a quick settling of our business in one way or the other, Alexander allowed me to take well-disguised a certain mahogany case of his in my hand as we left the tower)—he entered the house, leaving me and the half-suspicious and therefore unusually grave Mas'r Fox to await his return. To my surprise he stayed an unnecessarily long time from us; and when he did come back, looking pale with curbed indig-

nation, what he had to report to me raised my wonder indeed.

He had been ushered into a room, upon asking to see the Honourable scion, where was seated a gentleman with spectacles, who, as it afterwards obviously appeared, had been expecting him, and who announced himself as the friend of the delinquent. Alexander stated his business briefly, not omitting to mention the inconvenience we had been put to in coming to look for our apology, after it had been promised to be delivered to us some miles off, and some hours ago.

The spectacled gentleman, assuming very sensible airs, made most light of the whole matter; supposed that his young friend, however, had not meant to give offence, and that much he might say for him; but, indeed, as to any thing else,—"Pray, Sir," interrupting his own statement, and taking up my card which lay on the table before him, "and who is Mr. Mutford? and what kind of an address is this?"

Your brother gave the fit answer.

"Oh,—um; and may I ask again, Sir, if Mr. Mutford or his father ——"

(I withhold the rest of his question for a moment, Graves, to beg of you to note it well; to note it as a question proposed under the circumstances, by one holding the rank of an English country gentleman, and in this view it is valuable for more than its application to me; and also to note it in the sense *of* its application to me; of a thing to be reported to me—to *me*, Graves!—after my life, and with the effects of that life upon me!—and now hearken.)

"May I ask again, Sir, if Mr. Mutford or his father—*has any property in the county?*"

You need not be told that Alexander now pressed for a direct and immediate adjustment of his business. He was as far as ever from that, however. He had heard all that could be said.

"And had he now his full answer from the principal party?"

"Oh,—um,—certainly; Mr. Mutford might assure himself, indeed, that the thing could go no farther; and he ought to recollect that it was into a magistrate's house he sent his friend on such an errand; and he, the speaker, was himself a magistrate; and, in fact, proper care would be taken in the matter; and ——"

Your brother was about to speak, when the door opened, and the jolly-coloured, though not jolly-featured face of the old gentleman who had been with the Allens in the menagerie appeared at it, and its wearer forthwith strode into the room, working himself,—with the help of wine, no doubt,—into a curious kind of a passion, even beforehand. He repeated all that the man of the lens had said, and more; he insisted that the Honourable George Allen had said or done nothing but what was praiseworthy; that we ought to have kept our places in the presence of the wild beasts and of his party; that it was not endurable that ladies and gentlemen ——

Here he found himself arrested by Alexander, who prepared to withdraw from any more superfluous discussion with, evidently, two frequenters of Lord Lintern's hospitable table. "I have my answer," he said to Sir spectacles, "and my friend and I know how to act upon it."

At this both toadies spoke together, again insinuating magisterial threats, while they still would make inexpressibly light of our claims to a hearing of any kind.

"Oh, as to that, you know," laughed Alexander, "there are two counties in England."

The law should be respected in every county in England! and *that* we would find.

"Then, as I've heard, there's very nice sailing, although in a steamer, every day, to the French side of the Channel," he continued.

The gentlemen seemed struck, and interchanged glances in silence for a moment; then the old fellow faced round to Alexander, and asked, deliberately—"Pray, Sir, are you an Irishman?"

But it was getting too absurd, and your brother again moved to the door, with a threat in his turn, not much to the advantage of the genius for keeping his word, or for keeping his courage up, of the Honourable George. There they met him with something that made him stop a moment longer. Their young friend, in fact and in truth, must be shielded from inconvenience;—for he was no more than a boy; quite a boy.

Alexander asked if he knew of the intention of representing him in this light? He was told he might take the matter as he wished: "We are his friends, Sir."

"And meet me here, with his permission?"

"Certainly."

"Then, good night, indeed, gentlemen;" and Alexander hastened to join me.

It had occurred to him in the house to demand to see the father, in the son's place, the moment that the gallant youth withdrew from the discussion, upon the plea of non-responsibility. An apprehension of not being quite cool enough for a new interview, made your brother change his mind. Now we sat in the open fly, before the house, for some time, balancing the best course to take, while Mas'r Fox, at last fully aware of his awful predicament, looked silently and bodingly from one to another of us.

It was our joint opinion that, as yet, Lord Lintern had been kept ignorant of the whole occurrences, by the management of the two family friends. Alexander had met him slightly, and so had I, and neither of us believed, whatever might be his other sins, that it was he who had transmitted the white feather to his son's cap: hence we could not believe either, that he had assented to the measures taken under his roof, to meet our demands for an expla-

nation ; and hence, again, we assured ourselves he had not heard of those measures. Should we enlighten him by re-entering the house — or should we go home, and write a letter that we would compel to keep its temper ?

Home. But first a confirmation, or the contrary of Mas'r Fox's university intelligence. It was cheaply had. Alexander ascertained by a single inquiry at the door of a friend's house, on our road, that indeed the Honourable George Allen had been upwards of a year at Oxford. It next struck us, as a point of mere curiosity worth gratifying, to examine his parish register ; and Mas'r Fox looked quite posed at being commanded to turn back a little way to the house of the " tithe parson," whom he had sketched to me on a former occasion. And when we sent in a request, at ten o'clock at night, to the good Dr. Bailey, for permission to look over the parish books, on urgent business, doubtless his surprise equalled at least that of his little rebellious black sheep. He did not, however, gainsay our demand, and we were quickly made sure that our unaccountable boy had, as Alexander observed, attained the age at which the Irish admirer of Miss Tilney Long

had fought his conquering way to her hand and magnificent fortune.

And—" well," continued your brother, " I *am* puzzled."

" *Is* it what you said—the white feather?" I asked.

" Whatever it is, I hope there is not much more of it among us. I don't want to revive, in its absurd excess, the practice which was deservedly getting out of fashion, even when Fletcher wrote his Little French Lawyer to ridicule it; I don't want in England the gauging, or the blunderbusses in a saw-pit of Jonathan's land, nor the hedge-firing of Paddy's land, nor the sensitive point of honour of Monsieur's land; but I do want such a young blockhead as this, to be more of a gentleman—a man —(notwithstanding his registered plea)—either in precautions against rudeness and vulgarity, or else in spirit to meet their consequences."

" Or," I ventured to remark, " if it must become partially the rule among our young people of rank, never to explain away an offence against men or women, don't you think they ought always to stay at home?"

" Certainly;—even within the limits of the

county where their properties severally lie," he answered, laughing. "But come—here's the tower in view:—tarry, amiable Fox, for a letter;" we dismounted to walk up to the tower from the shingles—"And let us see," continued Alexander to me, "if these were the notions of the boy's father forty years ago."

Do not distress yourself with a doubt that Alexander failed in making out a very pleasing little history of the late transactions, beginning at the cage of the Lion and Italian greyhound, and ending at the plea of boyhood; to which I added two lines only, as a separate note, assuring myself beforehand, of the great willingness of Lord Lintern to grant me the slight indulgence his son had denied us; and both being faithfully copied, Mas'r Fox was summoned, and dispatched with them at the seasonable hour of half-past eleven o'clock at night.

No answer reached us next day; and now, in sad misgivings that the Honourable George was the true son of his father, I was under the necessity of sending to Lord Lintern, through the village post-office, (not, however, till the last moment at which it remained open,) my opinion of *his* seeming lack of punctuality; and

I do not mean to flatter myself, when I aver that the language of reasonable indignation, and downright insult had scarce ever before flowed so smoothly as it did over the polished page of essenced paper used on that occasion. It must have done good to any man's sense of decorum and politeness, to have been outraged in so beautiful a manner.

Well. This *did* produce something at last; and something more than I had reckoned on; or rather something different from it. First, however, I ought to mention another thing which it did not produce,—namely, an apology from the boy, delivered to me, at my father's residence, by the village post-man, early upon the morning after my last note to his father, and obviously written by him, at Lord Lintern's instance, before the latter could have received that note: and—observe, again, Graves, the address on the back of the penitent effusion was—"Mr. Michael Mutford"—*who*—(I add the meaning of the new insult)—*had no property in the county.* So, I enclosed back the apology to his Lordship, recognising it as the late result of your brother's first statement, and my first billet; expressing myself content with

it, in this view; and agreeing to accept it, provided the juvenile writer were instructed to alter the address. But I had not time to seal my letter, when a servant of his Lordship galloped up to our house with yet another explanation, and, indeed, an ample one, from Lord Lintern himself—the product of my agreeable communication by the post the night before; and this I had hardly perused, when a lady also galloped to our door, followed by a second servant, and in a few seconds, sent me up a summons to attend her in the little parlour. I descended, somewhat bewildered, and saw before me, greatly agitated, the recluse of Lilly White's fastness.

"Mr. Mutford," she began, you *must* be satisfied with us—I have come here, unknown to any of my family, to say so, having just heard of your last letter, by chance—and indeed it supplied my first information on the whole unhappy affair—but you must—that is, you *will*, Sir, give my father credit for good intentions—ay, and prompt ones, too, in your regard; so far, at least, as this matter goes—I assure you that he insisted on a written explanation to you from my brother George, the

moment after he received your friend's communication, and your accompanying note."

"Your brother George, madam?" I asked.

"Yes, yes, you know who I am, *now*—Lord Lintern's youngest daughter—but oh, Mr. Mutford, do not for that reason deny me the right of a peace-maker, on the present occasion, at least, if on no other—reflect, Sir; do, Sir, for Heaven's sake, upon the wretched—the horrible consequences of an open quarrel with any one of *us*—above all with my father!—dear Mr. Mutford, you *will* tell me that his last note has appeased you!"

It is curious to say that, one of the most distinct conclusions to which I came during this address, was that the lady's nose did not resemble in length or outline those of her brother George, and of her elder sisters whom I had seen in the cricket-field. And the second thing that fixed my interest, strengthened doubtless by association, was my being prohibited so expressly from quarrelling with her family above all people in the world. Before she had done speaking, several other matters connected with her, though disconnected with her present business in my father's house, re-occurred to me,

and I took a sudden resolution to change the topic between us, as soon as possible.

First, however, I assured her that I was perfectly satisfied with her father's note of explanation, even if her brother's had not contented me.

"Write him word, then, to that effect," she said; "do, Mr. Mutford, this moment! let me find no discussion continued on that subject, at least, upon my return home!—though, doubtless, I shall have to encounter enough displeasure on my own account—for this very visit to you, Sir: perhaps I may again be sent into obscure retirement to atone for my new offence! But no matter—and that is not the business—and you will say, no doubt, that I make allusions which do not concern you, *though you need not be too sure of that, Sir*"—(more mystery, or more raving, Graves)—"Oh!" here she looked out at the window, as another horseman, whom I only indistinctly saw while he alighted and walked to the street-door—"my most excellent friend! I knew it was but necessary to give him the slightest and hastiest summons on any good purpose—excuse me, Mr. Mutford," she opened the parlour-door, flitted out,

and returned with her friend,—"you will allow me to introduce to your acquaintance the Reverend Mr. Snow, Sir."

I bowed to a gentleman, past the middle age, whom I had before seen walking or riding by the sea, and whom I had understood to be one of the regular season-visitors of this little watering-place. His passing appearance had always filled me with very agreeable feelings of interest, and now, as he returned my bow, and as his smiling eyes met mine, I felt towards him, if it was possible, so suddenly, a movement of the heart and soul, which I have since called love—reverential love. He was rather tall, but slight; erect, and in every step and motion, a bland gentleman; his face—I must borrow the hacknied, but ever beautiful illustration of Sterne—"it was one of those which Guido has often painted—mild, pale, penetrating;" but the poor monk of the order of St. Francis may have had a conventual expression of piety, as indeed, the rest of the sentence, which I have left untouched, seems to hint, and the peculiar charm of the countenance before me is its total freedom from any such thing, while, still, it beams with gentle holiness.

How lamely does the pen attempt portrait-painting! I would try in vain, dear Graves, to give you any vivid notion of my subject. Pale, certainly—but of a beautiful paleness; paleness with blood in it; high, though not bald forehead; grey hair, slightly powdered, and worn very short; full eyebrows, straight for two-thirds of their extent, and then falling at an angle upon the finely-shaped and placid temples; blue eyes, with long lashes, and deeply folding upper-lid, and, when they decidedly smile, as they often do, almost closing in a concentrated glitter of benevolence; Roman nose; cheeks, all but wasted; a mouth of firmness and of power, but like the eyes, captivating; and a deep dimpled chin. This is all I can do—the best sketch my pen will make; and it is nought.

After Lady Ellen had introduced us, she continued to speak.

"But, Mr. Snow, I have the pleasure to tell you that we are little better than idle intruders, here; Mr. Mutford required no counsel but his own heart, and its feelings of right, and its impulse to do good for evil."

"Oh, to be sure, my dear, to be sure,"

observed her friend; and in his tone, and in his features, while he spoke those few familiar words, there was unutterable persuasion to Christian gentleness:—"reflection, and a short dialogue with the heart, are always sufficient to correct the first impulses of an imperfectly compounded nature: we thank you, Mr. Mutford,"—he took my hand,—"we thank you for recollecting what was due to the great law which we all obey, as well as to the peculiar relation in which you stand to this lady and her friends."

First, of this speech. I knew I was overpraised, but, without wishing to play the hypocrite, bowed to it. Secondly, my new acquaintance could not be raving, too, and yet he seemed to echo certain allusions of Lady Ellen. I was determined upon an explanation, as the following plain speech shows.

"Pray inform me, Sir, in what consists the peculiarity of the relation in which I stand to Lord Lintern and his family? Apart from the late discussion, and the most flattering, but, to me, incomprehensible interest of this lady in my regard, and my deep gratitude for it, what can I be to him or to them?"

They looked at each other, much surprised, but neither answered.

"I had not the honour of being aware of the existence of his Lordship, or of any one belonging to him, till a few months ago," I continued. This seemed to increase their astonishment.

"Surely you must have heard, Mr. Mutford, that Lord Lintern has but lately acquired his title?" asked Mr. Snow.

"Yes, Sir; but heard it only by chance, and not before the time I have mentioned."

"And also that he changed his family name, upon acquiring it, at the instance of the maternal relation, who bequeathed to him his last great accession of property?"

"No, Mr. Snow, that escaped me: but, in fact, my absence from England, either in France or the West Indies, until a few weeks before I came here, coupled with great seclusion from the world, and great indifference to its affairs,—nay, avoidance of them—easily explains my ignorance on even more important matters."

"Then Mr. Mutford still remains ignorant of the former family name of Lord Lintern?" demanded Lady Ellen, seemingly in a kind of

agitation that anticipated something extraordinary to come.

"Quite so," I answered: and, Graves, I shared her embarrassment, for now I, too, had my bodings.

"This is very, very extraordinary," resumed Mr. Snow: "did your father's solicitor, Mr. Mutford, give him no information of a necessity for changing the name and description of the defendant in a certain suit?"

"My father's solicitor, Sir!" I became terribly and irrecoverably aroused;—old hate—loathing—and a poignant new impatience at discovering who had been my late antagonists in defence of my sister, deprived me of all self-control:—"my father's solicitor, Sir! I tell you, for the information of my Lord Lintern, that, during the last three years, my father has had no solicitor in that certain suit! he *would* not stay in court as a pauper—at least not while I lived to earn money for a future effort—and that's the reason he *has* had no solicitor, Sir!—And now, Sir, you are answered!" Graves, I am a savage: in my fierce passion, I thought neither of the saint-like being before me, nor of his attendant seraph: indeed, I suppose I had lost even the physical power of seeing who stood

there to receive the brunt of my blind rage. "And being answered, Sir—and I being made wiser than I have been,—I thank *you* for it—you must permit me to wish you a good morning! my father awaits my services—my menial services, Sir, to rise from his sick-bed, above-stairs; and your friend, Lord Lintern, may be glad to hear that, too!—Your servant, Sir!—your most humble and obliged servant, Madam!"

And I was hurrying, with profuse bows, out of the room, like the bedlamite I am, regardless of the earnest and solemn entreaties of Mr. Snow, and the terrified and weeping supplications of Lady Ellen, both praying me to hear a word of explanation, when the door opened suddenly, and Bessy, also frightened, and asking what was the matter, ran in to us. The result of this interruption quite bewildered me. Lady Ellen flew to my sister, took her hands, and said—"For your sake, my dear—for your sake he will stay and hear us: pray, ask him, ask him; and let me bribe you with a single word!" Here she whispered an instant in Bessy's ear, and almost before she had done, Bessy half-screamed, and dropped sitting on a chair, seemingly petrified. I only conceived—

if I conceived any thing—that this was an additional outrage upon us by one of a detested family; and, without another word, I took Bessy's arm, and left the room with her, forcing her out. They sent Lucy Peat with messages, requesting me to return a moment. I begged to be excused; and at last they rode off from our door together.

Leaving Bessy to the attentions of her worthy maid, I turned to wind up my correspondence with Lord Lintern. I was in a pretty mood for the task, you will say. Judge. I tore in pieces the peaceful answer I had written to him, accepting his son's explanation, if the address were altered; and I wrote another note, imperatively and savagely calling for an abject apology, merely on the score of having been described as "*Mr.* Michael Mutford;" and I was very rationally about to dispatch this scrawl by the livery servant still in waiting, when, sent in by the guardian angel of my character for common sense, your brother appeared. Of course he had a right to request a view of my effusion, and I need not add, that he immediately insisted, notwithstanding my reasons for a change of temper towards Lord Lintern, upon

destroying in its turn, my amended note, substituting a fresh copy of my first, under the unsealed envelope which had contained it and the "Mr. Michael Mutford" explanation of my honourable half-cousin, and delivering both to the courier, with his own hand.

Although Alexander compelled me to this act of consistency, he could not succeed in putting me into good humour; nay, I am sure, in saving himself from some ebullitions of the disagreeable mood I was in: and so, tiring of me, no doubt, he went away, promising another call in the course of the day, to ascertain the final close of our affair with Lord Lintern.

The whisper in Bessy's ear now took possession of me, and I considered it, with a view to comprehend it, until it became as hateful as a serpent's hiss in my brain. I bounded up stairs, and finding her alone, though not perfectly recovered from the effects of her agitation, directly and abruptly asked her to tell me what Lady Ellen had said to her, to cause her such distress.

"Why, Michael, was it not enough to startle me as it did?" she said, composedly: indeed, with more self-possession than I had ever before

seen her command; and I observed that although still weak, she had been remarkably thoughtful as I entered the little sitting-room.

"I cannot judge," I answered, "until you shall have told me *what* it was, Bessy."

"And yet you were greatly agitated, yourself, at hearing who Lord Lintern is, Michael?"

"And that was all you learned from the whisper, Bessy, my love?"

"Could I have learned any thing else?"

It appeared to me, Graves, that she was deliberately trying to baffle me. I looked at her an instant. Doubtless to my inward impatience, the gentle and timid Bessy stood my glance. I shut the door: walked back to her, and said, vehemently, though in a very low voice—"Bessy, tell me the whole truth; take me out of horrible doubts and misgivings; or, Bessy, I will lead you by the hand into our sick father's chamber, and instruct *him* how to repeat my question to you."

She dropped on her knees at my feet, taming even my humour by her tremendous anguish, as, imitating my low voice, she answered—"Michael, I cannot tell you the whole truth, because I have taken an oath not to do so, for

the present—but do not make me kill my father!"

"An oath?" I repeated—"an oath to conceal what, Bessy, my little dear? to *hide* what? your——"

"No, no, Michael; do not speak the word that your lips are forming!—I cannot break my oath; but I will take another to you that you have no cause to be angry with me for my silence! that nothing is concealed; or, as you have said, hidden, which Bessy, your sister, ought to blush to make known! and more—that *we* are silent, for a while, only to make sure of doing *you* good, dear Michael!"

"*We*, Bessy? who, besides yourself, do you call *we?*"

"In pity, in mercy, in justice, and in manhood, Michael, ask me no more questions!—or if you will, dear brother, in spite of all these considerations,—if you will, I must still be silent! I must,—indeed, I must!"

"Well, Bessy, thanks for your zeal in my behalf—in taking this course to do me good,"—I laughed,—"and thanks for the little oath you promise me, on my account: kneel down again, with me, and give me your innocent hands,

Bessy." I held them tight,—"and now, swear by our dead mother to the truth of what you tell me."

She did so; and with such pure and angel-like energy—her glorious black eyes turning upward as if to fix them on her whom she invoked, in Heaven—that, whether or no I felt convinced—and I cannot even now answer the question—I embraced my little sister, as we knelt together, and tears assuaged the hot vehemence of my mood.

Indeed, I admit that all that I have recently been recounting to you, dear Graves, will read very much like the transcript of a madman's mind. I am calmer now, however: and only or chiefly worried with one question: namely, where or how am I to *get money* to transport my father and Bessy far from this detested place—far from all possible future contact with the destroyers of our earthly peace—for as to poor Bessy's secret, and her alliance with some of them "to do me good," I laugh heartily, indeed, at that. Beyond any question, they only impose on her credulity, for some reason not worth my finding out, if in truth, it be only an idle reason, and not big with evil

to her and to me, and to her wretched father—and there comes back a former fear—but, hell-spectre! I banish you from me—if I can.

Ay, Graves, for a host of reasons we ought not to stay here an hour longer, if possible: but where is what makes the old mare go?—The money, the money, my good friend. You will read this, yet, and censure me in your heart, and to your utmost, for putting the question. Do so, if you like. I have vowed it unto myself, Graves, never again to stand a pauper debtor before one of my fellow-men—I mean to an amount greater than I am at present—that I owe to half a dozen others, as well as to you—common acquaintances—men that talk of my poverty, and of my obligation to them. No. I have had enough of that. And I have now enough of other things, heaped upon it, to keep me from encountering any more of it. If I am to starve—or beg—or any thing else—notwithstanding my utmost efforts to make money of my own—nay, if I cannot save my father and my sister but by drawing upon the resources of others—let it be so: let them not be saved. Whose fault will it be? *Our* misfortune; our fate, altogether—but whose fault!

Eternity! prepare your scourges for him whose name—whose *new* name could here be written down in answer!

I say, my only friend, neither Heaven nor man expect me to plunder you (and if not *you*, who else?) any longer. And I say, again, that if the worst must come, *let* it come.

But I am erratic and inflated, out of time, and out of measure, as usual—as ever. To be sure I am. Cannot I stay here, without even going out of the house, till money comes, at its own good leisure? And doubtless it will come.

"Harold," my hero! *you* won't fail me? The day of his first rehearsal is now near at hand, Graves, and I have saved out of the Magazine man's munificent present, as much as will get me a ride up to town on the top of a coach, at all events: and then, as you are still on circuit, I shall have your chambers and little Joey, you know—so, huzza!

* * * * *

It is thought unnecessary to point out from time to time the portions of his journal which Mutford withheld from his friend. They will be guessed at, as they occur, even when he does not express his determinations towards them, if his character and complexion of mind have become sufficiently obvious. Moreover, Richard Graves shall presently appear acting in such a manner as may help to show how much of his confidence Michael Mutford hesitated to impart to him, although, be it added, the journal eventually got into the hands of the young barrister, in the same unmutilated form in which, (with his permission) it is now transcribed.

And we interrupt Mutford, a second time, in this place, for the purpose of continuing the history of him and of many with whom he has made us acquainted, in a way less favouring of

the affectation of mystery than his journal, in its most perfect and consecutive shape, can present: and notwithstanding that it is from his own subsequent experience and information that the facts immediately following are (necessarily) drawn, it would have been well for poor Mutford if his knowledge of his own affairs had come to him, in reality, as much in series as they are at present about to be rehearsed.

LADY ELLEN and Mr. Snow rode off from Mutford's door, greatly mortified that they could not induce him to return to the parlour and talk farther with them.

"Oh, Sir," said the young lady to her companion, "much, much good might have been done if he would only have listened to us, and allowed us to soothe him; but he *will* cherish his unqualified anger and aversion, as I feared was to be the case; and so, with hate and wrath just as inveterate, and just as blind, opposed to him, in the person of my father, Heaven only knows what frightful things may happen, at last."

"I perceive, indeed, with regret and grief, my dear," replied Mr. Snow, "that we have not found in the poor young gentleman sufficient predisposition for your contemplated good work of forgiveness and love, between all par-

ties. Sufficient material for it, I do not say; because, indeed, this very vehemence we deplore could, under fit direction, be a something else, —(nay, *is* a something else,)—fully answering to your purpose. Suppose we ride back in an hour or two, and endeavour to soften him again?"

"I fear that cannot be, Sir, for many reasons, the least of which is, what I must expect from my father on account of this unpermitted absence from his house. It seems to me that young Mr. Mutford's temper towards Lord Lintern can never, never be changed by any thing but a long-withheld act of justice to him and to his family. Without that, all our interference, all our time and opportunities,—and you know we are limited in both,—and all proposals of friendship and forgiveness between him and Augustus and me will prove useless, if they would not harden him in his hostility. I speak of his mind on this subject upon good grounds. Four years ago he wrote to my father a letter so full of, I must call it, tremendous recrimination and threat, that while it superfluously added to Lord Lintern's unnatural antipathy to the son of his father, and

fixed him, boy as he then was, in the shape of an individual enemy before my father's eyes, also proved his own deep-rooted sense of injury, his detestation, and his burnings for revenge."

"Alas, alas, revenge! Well, well, my dear, you think it was the recollection of this letter which armed Lord Lintern with so little of conciliation towards the young man and his gentle sister, upon the occasion of their first appearance before your father on law business?"

"Certainly, Sir; that and (I fear) ill-weighed impatience of what his Lordship called the cold-blooded audacity of young Mutford in taking advantage of his public liability as a magistrate to intrude himself into his presence. And then he insists that Mutford's manner during their interview, although not a word was spoken of family feuds, was provokingly marked and, indeed, audacious; I say nothing of what my father must have felt at his half-nephew's observation of the sudden appearance and vehemence of my poor brother on that occasion."

"But we can conciliate Lord Lintern, you know; at least, so far as assuring him that

young Mr. Mutford did not know who he was at that time, and therefore could have meant none of the peculiarity of manner, my dear. And, now, what do you propose? If we are not to return to Mutford, what are we to do?"

"Venture on our experiment so long spoken of, dear Mr. Snow. Try your powers as a peace-maker upon my father, since it is with him you must begin, if we can ever hope to touch the heart and clear the mind of Michael Mutford."

"At once, Lady Ellen?"

"At once, Sir; no time is to be lost. They may meet again, and soon, now that they know where to find one another; and, considering their mutually exaggerated sentiments upon one certain subject, I need add nothing else."

"No, indeed. Do I ride direct to the house with you, then, and pass into Lord Lintern's presence by virtue of your introduction?"

"Dear Mr. Snow, if you please; though I could wish you presented by a more influential master of the ceremonies than, I fear, I shall prove at present. You are aware that my father's methodical displeasure towards me on account of my former advocacy of poor Augus-

tus, has not yet subsided; that he has called me from my banishment in that unseemly old farm-house, and again allowed me the protection of his own roof, only because he fears that Augustus, once more broken loose from his authority,—excuse me if I add, his cruel persecution,—might find me out, and concert with me new acts of rebellion; you know, Sir, in fact, that upon the very same principle which sent me from home while my elder brother was near me, I have been conveyed back now that he is at large?"

"Indeed, indeed, my dear, all this is worse than I *did* know; surely I could not suppose but that your father's anger against you subsided the moment he invited you to re-enter his house, and that you enjoyed there at present the kind words, and looks, and acts,—if nothing else,—of every member of your family except one,—the poor fugitive one."

"On the contrary, Sir, I keep my room, or saunter out at stated hours, with the good Planche, alone and unnoticed, as if I were a stranger; and neither father, nor sisters, nor my brother George, think me yet penitent or punished enough to wish me a good morning.

So, as I have said, you can reckon but slightly on the force of my introduction of you to Lord Lintern; besides, the very misdemeanour of this morning does not add to my influence."

"Well, my dear, upon your presentation I will request a word with his Lordship, notwithstanding. And, now, let us see; inasmuch as your father's chief grounds of displeasure,—and, indeed, of misconception, of frightful misconception,—against your brother are derived from Augustus's interest in those poor Mutfords, our first endeavour ought to be to effect a full and ample reconciliation between Lord Lintern and his elder son."

"Yes, Mr. Snow, if for no other reason than to lead to an adjustment, between my father and that unfortunate family, of all their old differences, though Heaven knows there are other reasons to inspire your zeal."

"Ah, my dear, there are, indeed! reasons founded upon every thing that gives peace, and hope, and a high character to the heart and to the nature of man; upon our sense of all that is dear and great to us here and hereafter; upon our very sense of worldly and fire-side decencies:—alas, alas, my dear! it *is* sorrowful

to see the best earthly type of a state of immortal happiness,—a united and loving family of father, brothers, and sisters,—thus inverted, —thus—but pardon me, dear Lady Ellen, and rather let me ask you a question. You have told me that your brother Augustus came home from Oxford with only a few settled thoughts and principles on the one great subject; that afterwards, however, your gentle conversations, together ——"

"Yes, dear Sir, yes; they did, indeed, work a change, but to whose praise as the agent? Not to mine; I only feebly echoed the soothing, the tender, and the beautiful truths learned from other lips; for, indeed, Mr. Snow, until a blessed chance out of my father's house gained me your acquaintance ——"

"Nay, nay, my dear, flattery of one another makes no portion of our theory of love of one another, you know; so I must not listen to you. But what you tell me of your elder brother is very pleasing. Give us but one silken thread wound round his heart, and we may hope to draw him to ourselves,—oh, better than that,—better than to ourselves; and then we need not fear to hear him repeat towards

his father any of the harsh and afflicting words which, perhaps, helped more than his acts to widen the first sad breach between them: no, no, Augustus will then speak like a son to his father; ay, even though that father continue unfatherly, and the crude notions of unnatural, of unnecessary independence and equality between parent and child, which he has learned in, I fear,—(oh, indeed, my love, I fear it!)—the decomposing atmosphere of this world's morality, will appear to his mind,—nay, to his heart and spirit, and that is better again,—as foolish as they are wicked and dangerous. And now, my dear, another question, if you please; and though it is, in truth, a very delicate one, you will perceive its necessity, inasmuch as I am called upon in prudence and good sense to prepare myself for the coming interview in the house which just begins to peep at us through the trees yonder. Would much of our late allusions,—would much of their *feeling* be understood or relished by Lord Lintern?"

"Alas, dear Mr. Snow!"

"Well, well, my love; we cannot help it: and no man ought to judge of the heart of

another. But I comprehend you. The era of your father's youth—of his interior education—was not favourable to the growth and unfolding of the bud and the germ of true knowledge. It was the time of the influence of that seemingly vain-glorious, though really self-degrading philosophy which limited all of man's power and worth to the achievement of the mere mental, sense-supplied talents of man. And if we find, at present, individuals hugging to their bosoms, in old age, the uninvestigated mistakes of early manhood, let us recollect that some allowance is to be made for even the weaknesses of a nature in which all the elements of good and bad, great and little, generally work with alternate vigour. No, my dear, no; we must not, we will not, I mean, have less zeal in our proposed task, nor less interest in your father, on that account: for, mistake as he may, he cannot pluck out of the very centre of himself, his own noblest point of identity. He *is* what he says he is *not*, say what he can; all he has been made; all we can make him; though, indeed, not all he can, of himself, cause himself to be. Well—our conversation with him must then take a more worldly character than we

could have preferred (or, it is better so to anticipate, and leave a good chance to God:) and here I have yet another claim for information. Different persons of my acquaintance represent Lord Lintern's manners, differently. Tell me, yourself, my dear, for what am I to prepare on this score."

"I had better say, Mr. Snow, that—particularly considering the nature of the subject to be discussed between you and him—you may find my father abrupt, if not peremptory."

"No matter, my dear; one can easily arrange not to take notice, you know; besides, I am a clergyman; and, as I understand, other gentlemen of my cloth are welcome at his house, whatever may be his private philosophy."

"But not welcome in a way you would choose to give occasion for, dear Sir; in fact, we have but two reverend visitors—Dr. Bailey and his curate; and they are only welcome to dinner—and to after-dinner, I believe—and to their share in the high conviviality which, after his day of varied cares and troubles, my father thinks fit to indulge in."

"Well, my love. I am sure—although you have repeatedly warned me to expect much ex-

citement, and its results, during this interview —I am at least sure I shall not be offended."

"Dear Mr. Snow, my father knows no bounds to his temper or words on the topic you are to enter upon with him—Augustus and I have sent peacemakers to him before now, and —and he *did* offend them."

"I shall escape, however; for, in such a situation I *will not* be hurt, with any thing. So, we are now quite prepared. I make not the least doubt of having received from you a full admission of the faults committed, and the provocations given by your brother, throughout the whole matter."

"Dear Sir, I have indeed been quite candid with you."

"No doubt, no doubt, my dear: and you would have been so from a sense of truth as much as for his sake and interests, which require an ample knowledge of his case, in an advocate. Then, as I understand, extravagance at college was in reality his first offence?"

"That, Sir, and, of course, the ill-spent time and—why should we hide it?—the not creditable courses attendant upon such extravagance:

although, as, amidst all his affluence and success, my father is remarkably careful in money matters, perhaps we may say he felt most anger at Augustus's prodigal sins."

Mr. Snow made his own comment upon this hint. It tallied with the whispers of common fame, which attributed a degree of avarice to the seemingly ill-balanced character of the new Viscount.

"You will not forget, however," continued Lady Ellen, "that my father's notions of absolute authority over his children must have added to his displeasure against Augustus, when he found his commands broken through, his renewed injunctions made light of, and, finally, his parental power defied, and demands substituted for requests."

Again Mr. Snow interpreted Lady Ellen's words to mean that Lord Lintern sought to reign in his own family as a despotic chief rather than as a beloved father. He did not, however, excuse in his own mind the conduct of the despot's son, who, because a slavish obedience had been required of him, demurred to a show of obedience of any kind.

"And then, my dear, in the climax of their

unhappy bickerings, arose the question of the Mutfords, and then—" Mr. Snow paused.

"And then, Sir, came the miserable charge against poor Augustus," added Lady Ellen, in a broken and distressed voice.

"We will hope, my love, that Lord Lintern conscientiously believed he had grounds for that charge."

"Dear Mr. Snow, we will! oh, indeed, Sir, I do pray such may be the case! Though, alas, Sir, it is wretched to think that my poor brother was not suspected of any thing like it until after his discovery of the legal secret which would confer—if made known—a late justice and a most needful relief on our poor relations, the Mutfords—oh, Mr. Snow, I repeat, it is frightful to think of the coincidence! And to hinder myself from dwelling upon it, I do also repeat your hope, over and over, that my father may have been sincerely convinced, before he expressed that opinion of his elder son."

"Does it seem certain, my love, that the false and perjured witness, in your father's favour, and against the legal claims of his half-brother, Mutford senior, made no declaration of his crime to any person but Augustus?"

"It is quite true, I am sure, Sir. The man's illness and death were very sudden, and followed close upon one another; and though my brother hastened to his bed-side the instant he got his summons, the unhappy man had only time to acknowledge his falsehood, when he was called before a tribunal where there can be no perjury, given or taken. Augustus sent, indeed, for an attorney, as also for our father, but both came too late."

"Did your brother communicate the dying man's words to Lord Lintern immediately, and in the presence of the attorney?"

"No, Sir. A fear—an afflicting—an appalling fear, on his father's account, made him defer the disclosure till they were alone."

"I am sorry he deferred it; particularly when he had no good grounds for that fear, inasmuch as the repentant perjurer acquitted Lord Lintern of all share in his false story—have you not told me so, Lady Ellen?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Snow; and thank heaven, I was, and am able to add, that piece of information! Yes, indeed: the man solemnly assured Augustus that he invented and imposed upon our father a story which would signally defeat

the claim of the Mutfords—(and for the plausibility of which, his former position among the parties was unfortunately a seeming guarantee—) solely out of his own wicked mind, in the view of rendering a service which would be sure to be rewarded."

"But Lord Lintern gave no credit to his accusation of himself?"

"Worse than that, Sir. He gave no credit to Augustus's report of it: but when my poor brother, prompted by his noble and generous, though neglected and uneven nature, urged instant reparation of the wrongs we had unconsciously heaped on the Mutfords, by the perjurer's aid, Lord Lintern was at first cruel enough to accuse Augustus himself of a deliberate invention, got up in revenge for their former bickerings, in order to embarrass his father —and then, so soon as Augustus (very indiscreetly, I own,) began to threaten public exposure, the London doctor came down to us, and pronounced the judgment, and signed the certificate which placed my brother in restraint, out of our house, though within view of it, at the mercy of the at least as accommodating surgeon of the next village."

"But surely more reasons for forming his opinion must have been submitted to the London doctor, than Augustus's simple report of the dying man's declaration?"

"Oh yes, Sir; and, indeed, more likely ones, I admit: poor Augustus's rude and violent contentions with his father; his escape from home, for many months, we know not whither, but certainly with no creditable companions, or upon no becoming occupations—for when he returned to us, even his attire, to say nothing of his manners, hinted that he had not spent his time well: but, most of all, my father insisted that once, when he jumped through the window of the room where the London police officer had him in charge, it was with the shocking view of destroying himself. I am willing, Heaven knows, Mr. Snow, to excuse the doctor for the afflicting decision to which he came—yes, even though I am aware that the fee he received, was an enormous one."

"Well, well, my dear. I do allow that the power left in the hands of such professional gentlemen is excessive, and, as things now stand, liable to shocking abuse. But let us see if we cannot convince Lord Lintern that

the London practitioner has mistaken his patient's case, on the present occasion. The judgment of my eminent medical friend who met your brother in my house, by your invitation, joined indeed to my own, though I can speak but as an observer, going by common sense, ought to have some weight."

"Heaven grant it, Sir—to save us all from worse and worse affliction."

"If no effect be produced, your brother is determined, during his present absence from home, to disprove, in a public manner, the charges made against his sanity?"

"Alas, dear Sir, I fear nothing less. Nay, after that, I believe he purposes to see justice done to the Mutfords by his own evidence of the dying declaration of the person whose falsehood has so long been the chief means of depriving them of their rights."

"Oh, I hope, I hope, my dear, that things may never turn out so between them and him and his father. The public investigation would be scandalous to a Christian nation. Surely, surely, Lord Lintern will not be found quite proof against facts and reason, sense and prudence, feeling and nature. Surely, if we can

but convince him of his son's sanity—after obtaining his forgiveness for things done before the occasions which arose to supply a doubt of it—all may yet be well. Tell me, my love, Are you the only advocate of Augustus with his father?"

"Indeed, indeed Sir, I am. My gay and happy sisters laugh at a story which threatens them with a diminution of fortune; and my brother George will not be at the trouble, I believe, of considering the subject at all—particularly—forgive me what seems ill-nature, Sir, but *is* truth—particularly when implicit acquiescence in all his father's present views, opinions, and feelings, must redound, by contrast, to his future advantage."

"Let us rather say, dear Lady Ellen, that his mind is not of that active and inquiring order which will make an effort to ascertain truth in the midst of contradiction. Well, here we enter Lord Lintern's avenue, at any rate, and so are very near to certainty, one way or another, upon all these topics. But I see a carriage at the door—and if your father prepare to go out, what then?"

Lady Ellen assured her friend, that he need

not fear such a disappointment. Her father never left home before the expiration of the time allotted to magisterial duties; and it must be her sisters who had ordered the carriage for an early ride: "Should we happen to meet them, Sir," she continued, "before entering the house, you may see a proof of the light in which, (by my father's command, I hope, rather than from their own hearts,) I have the misfortune at present to stand in their favourable opinion."

Even while Lady Ellen spoke, she and her reverend friend came close to the open carriage, and her elder sisters issued through the hall-door to ascend it. As the fair peace-maker had anticipated, the long-nosed ladies just paused an instant to regard her, and then seated themselves and were whisked off from the house.

Lady Ellen led the way into a parlour, and sent a message by a servant to her father. In a few minutes, Mrs. Planche entered to reply to it. The good lady seemed to have been weeping, and was otherwise agitated and nervous. She drew her young charge aside, and in obvious distress, and as if against her own will, enforced some command, of which she

had been made the bearer. Mr. Snow saw his sweet friend become embarrassed and agitated in her turn; saw her remonstrate in a low voice, pause, and hesitate; then she suddenly addressed him, her hand stretched out, and tears in her eyes.

"I cannot have the honour and pleasure, after all, Mr. Snow, of introducing you to my father; his only answer to my message is a wish that I retire directly to my chamber:—however, as I told you, little will be lost by that; perhaps 'tis better you are spared my questionable patronage. And oh, dear Sir, I entreat you not to give up your good intention, on this account; your own request to see Lord Lintern, must be promptly attended to—and so, Sir, farewell—I cannot say for how long a time."

Mr. Snow warmly returned her adieus. She withdrew, followed by her companion. He summoned a servant, sent the message she had suggested, and, indeed, was in Lord Lintern's presence a few moments afterwards.

"I am under the necessity of introducing myself, Lord Lintern," began Mr. Snow, bowing, while every action and look, to say nothing

of his general appearance and manner, proclaimed the gentlest of gentlemen, and while his new acquaintance, sitting in the same official chair in which he had received poor Michael Mutford and his sister, took little trouble to welcome the visitor.

"And a very good introduction, doubtless, Sir," said the Viscount, in his usual hard way, with a sneer under it.

"My name, perhaps, you may have heard," continued the clergyman, sitting, uninvited: "it is Snow."

"No, I have not been so fortunate, till this moment, Sir;" and in saying this, Lord Lintern said not the truth. But he was preparing and steeling himself for what he guessed was to follow.

"Well, my Lord—I trust I shall not be the less at liberty to request your attention and good-will to what I may have to say."

"It is quite unnecessary, as well, I believe, as rather unusual, Sir, for a gentleman to require an introduction to a magistrate on public business," observed his Lordship, again equivocating with his own presentiments, while again he fixed himself upon the ground he had determined to take in the coming conversation.

"But, allow me to add, that I do not pray your ear on public business."

"Indeed, Sir?"

"No, indeed—but, with your kind leave, on business of quite a private nature."

"Business of a private nature between two gentlemen unacquainted with each other?"

"But, I hope, Lord Lintern, I anxiously hope, not to continue unacquainted;" and here Mr. Snow smiled one of those beautiful smiles which Mutford has called irresistible—without an exception.

"Pray oblige me, Mr. Sn—S—Slowe, I believe?"

The intended mistake was urbanely and good-humouredly corrected.

"Pray oblige me, Mr. Snow, with an account of this—I must beg leave to suggest—rather extraordinary private business in which two individuals, you and I, who never saw each other before, are to prove so very personally concerned."

"For myself, my Lord, I am not personally concerned, at least, no farther than hopes, wishes, regrets, and deep anxiety make me—and—allow me to correct myself - they *do* make

me personally concerned, deeply, really so; and will you not permit me to add, that this may happen without subjecting me to the charge of officiousness; that it may happen, naturally and involuntarily, to any one of us, to feel sincerely, for the happiness of———"

"Excuse me, Sir, but what can you mean by this exordium, so very like the beginning of an excellent homily? Permit me in my turn to ask, plainly, upon what business I have the honour of seeing you?"

"I come to crave permission to speak one word with you, Lord Lintern, on the part of an afflicted, an offending, but a truly penitent member of your family."

The Viscount, uttering what he meant to be a very cutting "Sir!" thrust his hand into his bosom, let his head fall against the high back of his chair, drew in his dry and liny lips, and continued to work them, in that position, while his body moved quickly from side to side, and his small but brilliant eyes twinkled, without passing from the face of his visitor. Mr. Snow remained silent, his benevolent smile still beaming.

"And, perhaps, you will be good enough

to tell me, Sir, by what right a total stranger to me craves permission to speak with me of *any* member of my family?"

"My dear Lord Lintern, I know I expose myself to, and perhaps deserve some reprehension for my freedom; but, indeed, indeed, I have the right; pause a moment, and you will concede it to me, yourself,—and I was about to say something of the kind before. The right to wish to see my fellow-beings happy—as happy as an earthly lot, blessed with all means of happiness, can make them.—Besides—though I scarce urge the point, I do not come here unsolicited, nor in the light of a self-elected advocate."

"So, Sir, so," Lord Lintern continued, nodding his head in mock emphasis, and what he wished to appear most imperturbable self-command, "the accredited agent of the honourable Augustus Allen."

"Of your elder son."

"Of the Honourable Augustus Allen," slowly repeated his Lordship—"Sir," rising, "your very obedient servant—I wish you a good morning, Sir."

"Nay, dear Lord Lintern, I beseech your

attention, I implore your confidence, one moment; I cannot, indeed I cannot leave your presence, even though you insist on my doing so."

Mr. Snow would not stand up. The Viscount continued to regard him a moment, his hand still thrust in an old-fashioned, theatrical way into his bosom, and his head slightly jerking from side to side. Then he suddenly faced round to a window, walked slowly to it, threw it up, and called out, again in the theatrical fashion—"Who waits there?"

Two able-bodied men, out of livery, appeared at the outside of the window.

"Look well to your duty," he continued, "I have another visitor this morning, and the principal may not be far off." The men ducked their heads, scraped their toes on the gravel, and passed out of sight.

"You can tell your client, Sir, that I am at least prepared against any renewed, and more serious attack upon my person," he added, turning to Mr. Snow.

"Lord Lintern! what superfluous as well as shocking fancy do you conjure up!"—And here, on the threshold of his attempt, Mr. Snow's

heart nearly failed him, so repulsed and so sickened was it, at, he thought, this affectation of a fear for his personal safety put on by the old man in order to assume additional grounds of dissent to a reconciliation with his son. Or, if it could not be called affectation, in reality! if the father's miserable hate and dislike were, indeed, so strong, as to make him absolutely fear what he professed to fear!——

Mr. Snow's disturbed reverie of a moment was interrupted. Lord Lintern advanced to him, repeating—"Fancy, Sir? you attribute fancies to me on the subject?"

"Nay, Lord Lintern, I attribute nothing—I wish to attribute nothing—indeed I do not—which can hurt or offend you. But, surely you are mistaken, as any one of us may be, at any time. If I thought, if I suspected you were not—if you can give me the slightest proof that you are not—"

"You would then, I presume, allow yourself to be civilly bowed out of my house, Sir, at the second or third attempt?"

"I would certainly not request permission to keep my seat as the *exculpator* of the individual whom you call—my client."

"Well, Sir, as neither your years nor appearance, nor, indeed, manners, allow me to form any scheme for being left alone, in which I may not be able to induce you to join—" (Mr. Snow bowed gratefully for the niggard and questionable compliment)—"yes, Sir, I say so much—and be assured that were not your manners and words exactly what they are, our interview could not have continued longer than other interviews, which your principal has tried to force me into with other agents, in this room—and that was no longer than the few seconds necessary for the entrance of my watchful attendants, Sir—the resolute men you have seen."

Again Mr. Snow bowed: and Lord Lintern's passion for despotism, particularly in the present affair, experienced enough gratification to permit him to talk more at length than he had contemplated in his first stern and lofty determinations—(ay, indeed, all passions, all moods of all passions—despair itself, can be flattered into inconsistency.) "It is your opinion, Sir, that my apprehensions are fanciful. Sir, could it have been fancy which, after *his* second elopement from Oxford to my house—pursued by sheriffs-officers—in debt ten times beyond the

annual amount of a liberal—a princely annuity—his books, his horses, his carriage, his very watch and wardrobe sold—as a sottish, mean mechanic sells his bed and working-tools to support his credit at the gin-tavern—"

"Very bad, very bad," interrupted Mr. Snow, seeing an opportunity for a plea—"I agree with you; very bad—and he agrees, too—indeed he does—is sincerely sorry and contrite—implores you to hear him say so, and to pardon him—"

"Could it have been fancy, I demand, Sir?"

Mr. Snow was interrupted in his turn, and Lord Lintern now spoke in his hardest voice and manner—"Could it have been a conjuring up of a chimera, when, at that time, he compelled me to send to London for a Bow-street officer—and, solely in order to save him and me from public disgrace—advise with a brother-magistrate how to keep him secured from—laying hands on me?—What, Sir?"

"He surely never intended the act, whatever may have been his language, my Lord; in a state of youthful desperation, as we may call it, brought on certainly by his own follies and sins, but added to, you will allow, by——"

"By what, Sir? Pray, let me have the benefit of your high opinion."

"By a union of hot and bitter feelings, which few of us, even in mature age, are at all times able to resist—humbled pride, shame, exposure, and, as he thought, disgrace, before his young friends."

Lord Lintern was disappointed of an expected opportunity for overwhelming his visitor. He had reckoned upon hearing an accusation against his own parsimony and harshness. His collected wrath condescended to ooze out in a smiling sneer:—

"I will praise him for one act of discernment, Sir—he has employed a good *advocate*, indeed."

Mr. Snow willingly answered by almost a good-natured laugh, and bowed once more.

"And must have engaged his services with a profuse fee," continued the Viscount.

"A profuse one, indeed—the hope of making him and others happier, my Lord."

"Of which of the courts is that the practice, Sir?"—The catechist still kept his tone; his face, and his manner wrapped up in a self-asserting reserve of irony.

"As they stand at present, of no earthly one, I fear, Lord Lintern."

"Oh—oho—then I have mistaken"—(all this was vapid equivocation, still)—"you are not his earthly lawyer, at that rate, Sir?"

Mr. Snow laughed again, and seemed exceedingly amused, and willing to be regarded as a fair subject for amusement.

"Pray, Sir," resumed the Viscount, "are you a preacher?"

"Occasionally, indeed, I do preach a sermon, as well as I know how," answered Mr. Snow: (The old hard-hearted parent, in order to rid himself of his visitor, was deliberately insulting a gentleman whose character he knew very well, and who, it was said, had declined a mitre)—"will you allow me to solicit the advantage of your presence when next I mount my pulpit?"

"I thank you profoundly, Sir, and you may be assured will visit your chapel the next time I feel in want of a homily—though that may not be very soon, however."

"A forgiving heart, Lord Lintern, at peace with itself, and loving others, can always whisper to itself its own homily."

"But observe, now, Mr. Snow, you begin

to indulge me, without any craving on my part."

"Well, well, my Lord, 'tis hard to forget one's trade, you know. I will try to speak with you, however, merely as a man of the world."

"Proceed — Mr. World."

"Nay, nay, now, Lord Lintern, do not suspect me of that egotism — indeed, indeed, I assume the representation of no opinions but my own; and merely in such a view permit me to ask you—standing so high as your name and character do stand — if the unhappy circumstances we have been alluding to are allowed to continue unaltered—nay, if they produce others of a still more unhappy description, in consequence of their unmitigated continuance—what, think you, will even that World say?"

"I comprehend you, Sir; and you really so far flatter me as to wish my candid opinion?"

Mr. Snow replied, still soothingly.

"I will tell you then what I think it will say —Mark you, we now only consider occurrences of an old date. It will say, that the father who felt himself called upon to protect his— life—by the interference of civil authority and power——"

"Oh, my dear Lord Lintern, that *was* a misconception, though a natural one——"

"Hear me, Sir. It will say, that the son, who, after causing such precautions to be taken, eloped from his father's home in the middle of the night, but half attired—spent months out of society,—no one can *prove* where—but, on the evidence of a well-replenished purse, and other things, any one may conjecture—among persons beyond the pale—ay, the legal pale—of *all* society——"

"Doubtless, my Lord, oh, doubtless—nay, I will pledge myself—he can satisfactorily explain his conduct on that occasion——"

"Mr. Snow—Reverend Sir—" resumed Lord Lintern, stepping back, and hugging his arms together over his chest, as if to suppress, with the stern grandeur of infelt injury and conscientious approval, a natural and great rising-up of wrath—"you have chosen to interrupt me repeatedly, after requesting my explanation—we shall have therefore concluded, in good earnest, after I say one word more. Before he sent you, Sir, to overcome me here at a single blow, (single sermon,) he sent others—waited upon by others still—fellows lounging

about my house, who, I believe in my heart and soul, had different modes of convincing in store for me——"

"Lord Lintern, Lord Lintern—do not go on—this is too revolting——"

"Sir, I do go on. Sir, I will go on. And do you not prepare to make me anathema? Sir—know that the man we speak of, deputed, to demand a supply of money from me, here, in my own house, another man whom the law of the land had bound over to keep the peace towards another father—a young, unbearded, but finished outcast, like himself—and, Sir, here I was bullied, and laughed at, and threatened—and know farther, Sir, that I have some proof——How now?" He interrupted himself to turn to a servant who entered with a letter of a bulky size. He tore open the envelope, and the contents proved to be those forwarded to him from Michael Mutford, at the interference of Lieutenant Graves, a short time before. His tintless, bust-like old face glared a moment through all its wrinkles, as he read Mutford's note, enclosing back his son George's apology. Then he advanced upon Mr. Snow, the papers in his left hand, and striking them with his

right-hand fore-finger, continued—"See, Sir—I was proceeding to speak of a matter with which these are connected — You have heard, Sir, doubtless, of the attempt to force my younger son and myself into a duel—here is the correspondence on that subject, yet unconcluded; and, Sir, I have some proof, I say, that this attempt, on the part of the most deadly, the sworn and devoted enemy of me and my family —has been countenanced by Augustus Allen—has been prompted by him;—that he and the Mutfords planned it together, as they plan other things against my honour and my interests; and I call their conspiracy a new plot to shorten my life, Sir—to shorten it for their own views, Sir—So, George." His hitherto favourite son lounged into the room, but it was evident that Lord Lintern now addressed him in rigid displeasure: their few words, aside, near the window, are added, although Mr. Snow could not overhear them. "Look here, George Allen: I thought you had at last ended this matter with the consistency, if not the spirit, of a young man of honour: after having first exposed me, by your imprudence, to the foulest, though I must say, manful and—hate him as I may—necessitous insult of Michael Mutford."

"Our friends advised me as they thought fit," observed "the boy."

"*Your* friends, you mean, Sir, not mine;—not mine, on that occasion, nor for the future, on account of it: in my own house, Sir, on a point which concerned my own honour, I should have been first consulted; and if I had, we should both have escaped this triumph of the Mutfords over us—for I insist, Sir, this time, at least, they are in the right;—neither love nor aversion, Sir, knows an exemption from the laws of honour: and besides, to have apologized as a gentleman, would, under all the circumstances, have best defeated your enemies and mine."

"If one had to do it *to* gentlemen," said his son George — "men of property in the county."

"Go, go, Sir, and alter the address on the back of that note, directly:—and let me tell you, I doubt the motive of your rent-roll calculations."

"They are excessively troublesome persons," resumed the Honourable George, yawning out his words, as he took up the note and retired to do as he was bid.

"I doubt it, indeed," was the father's involuntary and painful reflection: "and, whatever may be my other thoughts of the man who *was* his brother, I know he would at least have saved me from this."

Mr. Snow had not sat idly during the pause in the conversation between him and Lord Lintern. The exaggerated and unfounded allusions of his Lordship's speech, before the entrance of the servant, proposed the only good opportunity which had yet occurred for pleading the cause of the Mutfords and Augustus Allen together. And accordingly the apology-writer had scarce retired, when Mr. Snow resumed his task.

He could prove, he said, that, so far from any collusion having ever taken place between Augustus and Michael Mutford, they were not even personally known to each other. Lord Lintern smiled. "Nay," Mr. Snow continued, "I can prove also, to your Lordship's satisfaction, that the Mutfords' are not yet aware of the discovery made by your elder son in their favour——"

"The discovery? in their favour? What discovery?"—questioned Lord Lintern, growing

passionate, though he endeavoured to remain calm.

"The dying words of——"

"The dying words!" he echoed, starting back, and losing self-command. "The imaginary ravings of a madman! of a madman, who has been a rebel and a ruffian to his father —and who would have been—his murderer!"

"For mercy's sake, my Lord,—for nature's sake—for all our sakes—give up those illusory——"

"Illusory, Sir?—illusory, Mr. Preacher?—and you, too, have heard that tale, Sir?—how, I pray you? from whom? but no matter. Let it be known, I shall only act more firmly in the case of its raving author. Good day, Sir."

"Dear Lord Lintern, *if* it were a true tale—*if* you could be brought to believe so?"

"Good day, Sir, I say—*if* it were! ay, if it were as true as daylight, they shall establish its truth, before they compel me——"

"Nay, nay, I am sure you would not need to be *compelled* then, Lord Lintern."

"You are, Sir? so very sure?—look ye, reverend gentleman. 'Tis your *profession*, at least, to preach down hate—honest hate—stored

up eternally for injury received. But 'tis not mine. No, nor my practice. I *do* hate them —ay, from my heart to my teeth—*because* they have——"

"Injured you? *they* injure—*you*?—*they*, the humiliated—the impoverished—the defeated—*you*——"

"*I* the affluent, the successful!" laughed the old man, at last completely roused—"Ay —even so, Sir!—Mark you—I do not say their poisoned arrow pierced me—but it was shot, Sir—and the bow drawn to its utmost bend, although the shaft flew wide and harmless! A word in your ear, Sir. The very charge which I have made good against them, and, on it, beggared them—crushed them—they began by whispering against me! that very charge! that very tainting, degrading, withering one! D' you hear, Sir?—Good day, good day."

"But, even so, they *starve*, Lord Lintern, at present."

"Do they so!" he laughed again, in a low key.

"Lord Lintern, I implore, I conjure you, listen to me tranquilly for a moment. In the name of prudence, if not of——"

"Prudence? and you, too, end with a threat, Sir?"

" Oh, far, very far from me be the thought! Indeed, Lord Lintern, you mistake me,—and you mistake other things,—pray allow me—*that* is what I aim at saying. Suppose, now—in the name of good sense I repeat,—suppose your opinion of the present state of mind of your elder son should prove unfounded——"

" Ah! I knew it would come out:—well, Sir, suppose it. Then, of course, he *has* heard those last true and dying words which——. Pray oblige me, Sir, by answering one question in your turn. You fear, do you not, that during his present trip from home, your client may seek to reverse the medical judgment already recorded?"

" And now, my dear Lord, reflect—and say that I did fear such a wretched event?"

" Who waits there?" interrupted Lord Lintern, a second time throwing up the window, and a second time his life-preservers appeared. " This gentleman requests to be shown to the avenue-gate," he resumed.

" I could kneel to you, Lord Lintern, not to break up our interview, at this moment," pleaded Mr. Snow, as the men paced to the hall-door. " Think how horrible will be the contention!

think what men will say, if you forget what God must judge. Or, for the present, let us pass the Mutfords, and speak only of your repentant and reformed, though once very culpable son."

"This gentleman," resumed the Viscount, pointing to Mr. Snow as the body-guards entered.

"He is indeed sincerely reformed, and yet, without your pardon and love, some way or another he *may*—perish!" urged the advocate, moving to depart.

"He *shall!*" answered the father.

"May I not speak of him again? Some other time, when you——"

"Good day, Sir," and Mr. Snow, was almost literally handed out by the fellows in waiting.

"Appalling!" said the good man to himself, as trembling and weak in every limb, he rode off from the house of hate and strife; "and yet these things *do* happen in our land."

He had scarce left the library, when Lord Lintern walked up steadily to the apartments of his younger daughter.

"Madam, by your leave," he began, bowing to Mrs. Planche,—that lady withdrew.

"Lady Ellen," he continued, without seating himself, "where is the rebel at present?"

"My dear father!—"

"You *know*, where?"

"I will not utter an untruth,—I do."

"But will not inform me?"

"Indeed, indeed, my Lord, I fear I cannot."

"*Will* not? 'tis the third time I have asked you; *will* not?"

She wept, and remained silent.

"As you wish, then. But now allow me to tell you the consequences against which you have been warned—and have braved. From this day forth, you are as much a rebel to me as he is, and shall be treated as such. Prepare to travel with me, to-morrow, to your maiden aunt in Wales. Prepare to travel alone with me. Your dear Planche is relieved from farther care of you. She leaves my house without seeing you. And, till we begin our journey, to-morrow morning, others shall take care of you. Permit me, in the mean time, to remove your writing-desk. And, observe me. Any attempt to possess yourself of pen, ink and paper surreptitiously, will be punished, as well as foiled. So, farewell. Your Godly

orator has not been *too* successful. Farewell!"

He retired, carrying the writing-desk in his hands, and the deep sobs of his daughter followed him more than half-way down to his library.

MUTFORD, IN CONTINUATION.

—RETURNED from your chambers and Joey, dear Graves, and you still on circuit. Of course you remember I went up to attend Harold, in rehearsal. And how are they getting him out? Learn.

I saw the manager, in his room at the theatre, early the morning after my arrival. His reception of me augured well. He pledged me his solemn word that I was an honour to the British Drama, (!) and then went on, unasked, to say, that there were two ways of arranging with an author for an accepted play: the one, to allow him to take his chance upon its success, at a certain sum for every third night, till the ninth, and he would reap still more emolument the fifteenth, the twentieth, and the thirtieth nights, I believe; the other, to purchase the

stage-use of the piece from him, beforehand, at a price certainly less than great success might yield, but which must be considered reasonable if the chances of public opinion were taken into account, and also, that, under such a treaty, all risks lay at the door of the manager. I need scarce tell you that I at once resolved to enter into the arrangement last described. In truth, to say little of my misgiving of my own claims in any play I could write, to the unqualified success lengthened out into "the thirtieth night," ready money was my earthly god, at the moment; and you will smile to hear me add that my pulses tingled with pleasure—(home, father, and sisters, not forgotten in the quick association of thoughts which produced the sensation)—when my beloved manager, my prince of liberal and straightforward patrons, named a considerable sum for the purchase of Harold, out of hand, and offered me a check instanter.

"Glorious age of authorship!" I mentally exclaimed, "but glorious, above all, for dramatic authorship!"

The manager had sat down to his table, unlocked and opened a drawer, and taken out a

check-book. Before he could proceed fárther, some one knocked at his door, and a young man, dressed shabbily genteel, and with a spare and sallow face, whom I afterwards learned was a "copyist" of the theatre, presented himself.

"Well, Wood—has he come?" asked the manager.

"No, Sir," answered Wood, gravely.

"How is that?" My patron looked perplexed; the toil-worn copyist crept deferentially to his side, whispered something, and now he grew really agitated, as, hastily returning his check-book to its drawer, he begged me to excuse him a moment: and then I was left alone.

In vain I said to myself that this interruption could have nothing to do with me or Harold. An omen possessed me in spite of my reasoning, and I wished the check filled and signed, and safe in my pocket. The manager reappeared, sighing profoundly. Harold was about to be rehearsed, outside on the stage, he said, and my presence, there, would be necessary. I must prepare myself, however, to regret the absence of "the greater man of the two for whom I had written," as sudden indisposition kept him at home: but, I could read

his part, and all the other performers were at their posts. "Doubtless, he would punctually attend the very next rehearsal, for, as I had before been told, he had perused, and highly approved my tragedy, expressed gratification at the prospect of playing in it, and actually taken home his part, in his own carriage, months ago, having come to the theatre himself to demand it of the copyist; a show of interest very unusual, and highly flattering to me—though, indeed, not more so than I merited."

Ah, Graves, young as I was in a knowledge of the little world of the green-room, I did not like this insisting upon the favourable disposition of "the greater man of the two," in my regard. Nor was I comforted at perceiving that the manager proceeded to bustle through some papers before him, without again recurring to the check-drawer. "They are waiting for you to begin, Mr. Mutford," he said, seeing me stand still, "and, as to the money-transaction between you and me, you can step in here, again, after the rehearsal, you know."

I left the room, and groped my way towards the stage, through almost midnight gloom, now kicking my shin against a step, now hitting my

nose against the edge of a piece of displayed scenery. The performers were, indeed, all assembled, with the exception of the star of the first magnitude. The melancholy and cadaverous copyist introduced me, as the author of Harold, to the prompter,- who sat at his little table, to one side, near the lamps, my well-known MS. before him; and the prompter, to the second-great man, and to two or three third-rate, "respectable" performers; and after I had stood a general stare of listless curiosity, the stage was ordered to be cleared for business. I had the honour of a crazy, rush-bottom chair, along with the second-great man, near to the prompter; and this second-great man soon induced me to think, by his volubility, that the comparative opinion of his merits, hinted in the title I have given, formed no part of his estimation of himself: although even the tax-gatherer might have suggested to him the general notion on the subject: for his popular contemporary paid duty to the king for a regular four-wheeled carriage, while he did the same thing for only a two-wheeled, one-horse gig.

'Tis no use my tiring you with a particular

account of the rehearsal. Let me only say that the false readings of the mob of inferior actors, in this, their first effort to comprehend their author—nay, the occasional lapses, in the same way, in the person of their master, for the day, filled me with astonishment, when I recollected how seemingly self-directed and intelligent is their delivery, at last, of the words written or printed for them, when they come out to amaze the public. Yes; I will add that, to my greater surprise, ay, and to my indignation, (suppressed,) my second-great man deliberately "cut down" his part, in two or three places, where he had to go on with a "rising young actress," because—as afterwards came to my knowledge—her speeches were, for the time, more striking than his. I objected to an abridgement of my Harold, and he undertook to demonstrate to me, in an easy, good-natured, self-supported strain of eloquence, founded on his long experience of the stage, his literary studies of the drama, and his perfect knowledge of what he called "the thick skull of audiences," that, so help him all his Divinities, he was utterly in the right, and only doing for my good.

We broke up, the tragic orator shaking me

very warmly, and somewhat vehemently by the hand, at parting, and longing for the pleasure of meeting me again at the next rehearsal—that day week.

"I question if you will see him here again, Sir, for all that," said a young person, at my side, one of a group of amateurs, as I had supposed, who, during our mouthing of Harold, had stood out of the way, between two wings.

"Excuse me, Mr. Mutford," this individual continued, "but I am naturally interested for a dramatic author, being one myself, and a good deal about the theatre, here;" and he proceeded to mention his name, and the latest four or five pieces he had produced, with varied success—romantic melo-dramas, and operettas, and one for the last company of horses.

"And though not in buskins now," he resumed, "I began as you have begun, and so know my men. You may have your tragedy acted, by contenting yourself with one of the two—which ever you like—(though I doubt even your chance of a choice, for, between you and me, our Roscius is losing the faculty, as well as the inclination, to commit any new lines)—but as to the project of getting them

together into one new play, to run the risk of public opinion as to which part may be deemed most effective—vast, indeed, is the faith which encourages that."

"But, Sir, they have both accepted their parts from the outset, and taken them home to study."

"To be sure they have," answered my new friend.

"But not sincerely with the intention of acting in my play?"

"You will see, Sir—you will see: I tell you, I know my men," he answered, sagaciously.

"Perhaps you can also tell me," I resumed, "why they adopt such unnecessary duplicity?"

"Indeed, and I cannot, unless it will satisfy you to say, that such is our way, in the green-room."

"Then Mr. —— is not so very much indisposed, to-day?"

"Why, perhaps not," laughed the quadruped dramatist; "or he may be—a little—you comprehend me, Sir?" he continued, tapping his leading finger to his forehead, and smiling pleasantly, as he withdrew.

But indeed I did not comprehend him; or,

at least, but a glimmer of his possible meaning was in my mind. Clearer perceptions on the mysterious points were not necessary, however, to send me back to the manager's private room, with even a more boding heart than I had left it. My aërial funds fell fifty per cent. in my own credit. I would have given my note of hand to half the amount of the check which had been so nearly in my pocket, just to see it put down again, in a perfected form, before me.

Once more scrambling my way through the darkness behind the scenes, and knocking myself against twenty unseen things, I repaired, however, to the manager. He met me, at the door of his penetralia, in a great hurry. He was just leaving the theatre, on a sudden emergency; and, indeed, he had since been speaking with his treasurer, and that gentleman doubted if it would be well to give me a check at this moment; but we could arrange our business in another way: I might draw upon him, at three months' date, and he would accept for me, at the next rehearsal, that day week—and so he left me to get out of the intricacies and dungeon darkness of his theatre, as well as I could.

I will not trouble you, Graves, with my ap-

preciation of the whole of this day's adventures. I will not lay before you,—in detail, at least,—my disgust, as well as my impatience, of the petty trickery to which my industry, (if nothing else,) as a writer for the stage, and one innocently impressed with reputable notions of the characters of its public servants, seemed about to be sacrificed. Ay, and my pecuniary interests (and in *my* situation!) also. But believe me, the entire thing sickened and abashed me—(you will add, enraged and stung me). *Manager*—(what a good name!)—*actors*—(a better one!)—the man who began, like myself, in buskins—nay, the inanimate accompaniments of my position on the stage at rehearsal that day—the dusty, dingy passages—the paltry wrong-sides of the wings and scenes: (ay, I have indeed been behind them!) the whole character of flimsy, and shifting, and daubed, and gingerbread contrivance of the place—even these, and this, qualmed me, by irresistible association, and my interior arose—not very rationally, either,—against the very physical material of a theatre.

Was I at all comforted by the floating hope of the bill, at three months? I strove to be so,

as I bent my steps to dine with Bessy, by invitation, at the house of her old boarding-school mistress; for Bessy had accompanied me to town to stay a few days with this good lady, as I believe I have before told you was to happen. To the inquiries of my poor sister concerning the rehearsal, and the first night of Harold's coming out, in earnest, I answered as well as I could; but the state of my spirits sent me, at an early hour in the evening, to the seclusion of your chambers, dear Graves.

Very well. I employed the following seven days industriously; and my former patron of the obscure magazine actually advanced me a few sovereigns more, (and they were very welcome,) for "accepted articles." By the way, I wrote a polite note to the tenant you got me for my own chambers, hoping he might be able to settle for the few articles of furniture I left behind me; and this I did because the Jew broker, learning by some means my arrival in town, had applied to *me* to satisfy *him* for them. But my tenant as politely requested a little more time, and I strove to conciliate Moses.

The second rehearsal day arrived, and—

But I *will*, first of all, mention a fact,

Graves, distinct from Harold, which occupies my mind, even more than he can do; and *only* mention it in this place. The previous day, passing by the house where Bessy is staying, I saw her half-cousin, George Allen, lounging near the door. He walked away at my approach. I entered the house, and asked to see its proprietress; and when we were alone together, I bluntly demanded of her if Bessy had received any visitors since her arrival in town. The good old lady looked serious and concerned, and after a little hesitation, answered, "Yes — one visitor."—"A young gentleman?" I was right; and Bessy's friend went on to say that her own mind had been disturbed on the subject, and she had spoken to her former pupil, and, fearing that her remonstrances might be disregarded, she had almost resolved to communicate the matter to me also, long before I had opened this conversation of my own accord.

I kept my breath and my countenance, and inquired how often the young gentleman had seen Bessy under her roof?

Twice, that is, to the school-mistress's knowledge; but she feared, oftener than that, by the

connivance of a servant, who, in consequence of her ill conduct, particularly on this occasion, had been discharged that morning.

I wondered how any servant could admit a visitor without the knowledge of the proprietor of the house: and what answer did I now receive? and how did it affect me? Judge from its nature. "Certainly," said the good lady, "it was impossible, or nearly so, that such a thing could happen during those hours of the day or the evening, when the owner of a house was usually most observant." My heart — my heart started, Graves, though my body and limbs were quiet! And I had something else to learn. Bessy once left the house, and remained out of it for hours, under the protection of her half-cousin, and, it seemed, accompanied by her confidential maid-servant.

Now, what did I do? Call Bessy before me? No. Indulge my temper, and the tremblings of my darkened and breaking heart, in any way? No, indeed. I only thanked the schoolmistress, after a pause of reflection; requested her not to permit her visitor to see "that young person" again; added my entreaties that my sister might also remain ignorant of my know-

ledge of the matter; and then I quietly left the house, and went home to your chambers to finish "a literary paper."

And the next day was our second rehearsal day, and I repaired to the theatre. All of my *dramatis personæ* were assembled on the stage, with the exception only of those two who had promised to represent Harold and his Norman rival. I found my literary acquaintance of that day week talking fluently among the third and fourth-rate actors. He nodded kindly to me, came to my side, and said, "I believe I told you?"

"What?" I asked.

"That your friend, Mr. ——," (naming the second great man,) "would not meet us here to-day?"

"And will he not?"

"The prompter has just received his written excuse for staying away — did you think that he, too, would not have his turn at putting us all out?"

"And his copy-giver?" I demanded.

"Why, just as we were going to send a call-boy to his house, his wife sent a servant to us, asking after him," smiled my colleague.

"And he was not here?"

"No—nor at home either, the last two nights; you comprehend?" and looking again very wise and expressive, my informant turned to harangue the actors.

I proceeded to the manager's room. He received me in a kind of pathetic way.

"Well, Mr. Mutford—well, Sir—and you see—I protest to you, Sir, I do not know what to do, among them: look here, Sir," putting a note into my hand; "my new stage-manager only wrote to him, during the last week, a matter-of-course request to know what night he would name for bringing out Harold; and because I had not written myself, I suppose, or perhaps because the name of the late stage-manager did not meet his eye,—there, Sir, there is what he sent us, in answer—read it, Mr. Mutford, and judge for yourself."

I opened the note, and found its substance to be the following words, penned as if by a man in an ague—

"Who the devil are *you*, Sir?"

Suppressing my contempt, I asked, "Then he, too, will disappoint, to-day?"

The manager had not time to reply, when a rapid knocking sounded at his door; and, at a command to come in, one of the smart and pert

little porters, or door-keepers, whom I had observed (and disliked at a glance) in the dingy hall, or apartment, inside the stage-door, thrust in his head and shoulders, and with great agitation of manner and omen of face,

("Even such a face," &c.)

whispered out—"Oh, Sir!"

"Come, at last?" inquired the manager, also turning pale, and starting up.

"Yes, Sir—but—" touching his forehead, as my horse-dramatist had done—"you know, Sir."

"Ah!" groaned the manager; "I do. In his carriage—to the stage-door?"

"No, Sir, on foot; and walked in through the box-office door."

"Where is he now?"

"Pacing the front of the stage, Sir—up and down—speaking to no one—and looking—you know, Sir."

"Ah, don't I?—Mr. Mutford, I'll step out a moment—just to observe him—to study him—from a stage-box—to read him for you—and be back in a moment."

I laughed heartily, when left alone, at the absurd and caricature-likeness which this scene

bore to the sublime fright of the servant who comes in to announce to Sextus Aufidius, that Caius Marcus Coriolanus is sitting silently at his household hearth. But I could not long enjoy my mirth. The manager soon hurried back to me, as he had promised, with a stealthy step, and a face of inward agitation; and coming close to my side, said—"Not a hope of him to-day, Sir—not a hope—I have studied him alone, Sir, without his seeing me—there he is, still striding up and down—(in dirty boots, Sir,)—every one afraid of him—and the visage, Sir—the visage and the brow, hopeless, as I 've said—haggard—wild—and—and—in fact, you know, Sir—" and my manager also touched his forehead; so that the devil was in it if I did not know now.

I supposed I might go home then, for that day?—The manager really could not take upon himself to say; and he was hesitating and surmising, when the prompter entered, not less fluttered than the little stage-door keeper, and said, "He has gone into the green-room, and demands to have Harold *read*, instantly, by himself and all the people in attendance."

"Why this is throwing us back, terribly,"

remonstrated the manager; "the tragedy was read before in the green-room, every one present but himself; and now that we have it removed to the stage, in the regular way, he sends it back to the green-room again. What *is* to be done? But I suppose he must be humoured — so, call in all the performers."

The prompter withdrew, and the manager resumed, —"Perhaps, after all, we *may*, by judicious treatment, work him on — perhaps we may, Mr. Mutford."

I thought this instant of re-gleaming hope favourable for presenting my three-months bill for acceptance, and accordingly I drew it forth.

"What 's that?" asked my manager; "oh, I see; the bill; to be sure; just cross over to the treasury and hand it to the treasurer for entry in his books, and then come and join us in the green-room, and then — let me see — yes — after Harold is read, I will go and accept it for you."

I did as I was bid. Two or three carpenters, and one or two dingy individuals of (to me) a nondescript character, directed me across the stage, and through the various doors and passages, and up the littered stairs, which led to

—the treasury—(do you note how the magnificent style is used upon all possible occasions within the walls of a theatre?)

My grave, sententious treasurer examined my bill, opened a book, entered it, and laid it on his table, with the remark, that he did not think it wise of the manager to accept for such a sum within the time specified in it, "for we have heavy and numerous engagements to discharge exactly about the date at which your bill will fall due, Sir;" he continued, uttering instructions, (as I have since had good reason to believe,) given to him by the manager, who had not enough courage or honesty to say as much to myself.

I did not think it worth my while to make any answer, but turned, merely saying "Good day," out of the treasury. "And the great man, Sir, begins to *fault* your tragedy," I heard him add, as I stumbled down stairs. And here was another hint put into his mouth for my edification.

I found my perilous way to the green-room. The great man, and all, were seated round by the walls, each with his own part in his hand: the prompter personated the second great man,

holding my poor old manuscript; and the reading of the tragedy had begun before I entered. Haggard, indeed, was the countenance of the public favourite; and I wondered that the eye which a thousand critics have extolled for its gleamings behind the lamps, could seem so dull in a private room; (I ought to have made allowances, however, for its glassy stolid expression, *this* afternoon,) and that the whole appearance of the man who acted kings and heroes to the life, could, in his own clothes, be so disreputable. Nay, (Heaven pardon my simplicity!) I wondered at his private manners, too. I wondered to see him sneer, nay, laugh, whenever the poor, rising young actress before spoken of, (a retiring, interesting girl,) attempted to read in her best style her own part; and I suspected that a horsewhip, or a respectable switch might, with some justice, have been applied to the shoulders of the half-sober fellow, (not, indeed, by a gentleman,) for interchanging, in her presence, with a third-rate actor whom he patronized, certain signals and actions of low blackguardism, which brought the blood to her cheeks, and the tears to her eyes, more than once.

Pshaw—let me end the paltry scene—ay, and the subject. Harold was read. I went back to the treasury for my bill. The manager had not been there. I went to the manager's room. He had left the theatre, and, his representative believed, London, by this time, having been summoned to a country theatre, in which he had some interest, upon pressing business.

"And when was he expected back?"

'Twas difficult to say. Perhaps he might return in a few days; perhaps in a week or two. I bent my steps to the Temple; on the way, engaged places in a stage (my gratitude to thee, oh magazine-man!) for Bessy and myself, next morning; spent all that day with her; and arrived here, at home, with her, the following evening; resolved to—let me see—ay, resolved to write a novel, and try whether the public would treat me better than its drunken favourite, who, as a play-maker, kept me from even appealing to its judgment.

And that is how they are getting out Harold, Graves.

Bessy? Not a syllable have I spoken to her; that is, on the subject discussed between me and her old school-mistress. Not a breath. And, since that day, very little on indifferent subjects either.

The determination upon which I have acted, and which I formed before the old lady and I had done speaking, was this;—to enter into no explanation with her; to provoke no opportunity that would provoke *me:* to keep myself from the present proofs—the *proofs* of the tissue of falsehoods she has uttered to me; to keep myself from the proofs, if indeed they exist, of her shame and my destruction; to do all this—but to watch her; to watch her with a careless eye, and while she thinks I sleep; to watch her—and *him:*—to watch, and watch, and watch, *till I can once catch them together.* That was the determination I formed, and upon

which I have acted, and upon which I do act, and upon which I will act.

As yet, I am sure he has neither come near the house, nor sent a message, since our return from town. Ay, I am *sure* of both these things, although Lucy Peat is still her attendant. I said I would watch.

But, although my lips are mute to Bessy, she must perceive the change—the estrangement in my manner—(do I begin to hate—loath her!) —and how does she take it?

I cannot answer. She quite puts me out. My little Bessy, whom I thought so simple, and childish, and transparent! Does she resent or return my reserve? No. Does she wilily try to coax me out of it? No. But I am quite sure she thinks and ponders as much as I do, and has her own plans, as I have mine. Counter-plans? underminings? Again I reply I do not know.

That her love for me remains, I believe. Her words and voice are always gentle and affectionate to me; and I often detect her gazing with a smile, though perhaps with a tear, too, at my face, when we sit at table with our father. (He grows feebler every day,

Graves.) She flies, like a fairy, to meet my slightest wish: and to-day, as I thanked her, in a kind voice, in spite of myself, for some little service, sweetly and gracefully done, she murmured, in pleasure, and snatched my hand, and kissed it.

And that had not happened between us since our journey from London, now a month ago. Upon that occasion, I repulsed some of her little caresses, and so there ensued a grave civility on both sides. We were alone in the stage; other passengers had got down on the road. I sat silently and sadly, opposite to her, looking out at the window. I had been watching her for some outward evidence, in manner, in eye, or in speech, of a thoroughly changed heart and nature, in consequence of her late secret adventures in town; but I could detect nothing of what I sought for; nothing decisive, at least, to my mind;—there was only a new manner, now and then, upon her; and her brow was only changed to thought—nay, I believed, to placid thought! and although she sighed often, her sighs were sighs of pleasure (and I could not bring myself to add, guilty pleasure)—nay—after hearing me declare, in answer to her in-

quiries, that Harold would not be produced, and could therefore yield me no money — she smiled up into my face, and changed her place to sit close beside me. I was puzzled, just as I have been since, and still am, at her conduct. I averted my eyes, and became more engaged than ever with the landscape abroad. It was then she gently bowed her head to my hand: and it was then I repulsed her.

HALF a volume of my novel done.

But Lucy Peat still in the house, because neither my magazine patron, nor the quarter's interest of my father's money in the London bank, has done more than half pay the irremediable debts we have been contracting—and our debt to her, among the number. But I do not much fear the girl, now. Not since I made up my mind to observe her. Besides, I have just heard, by chance, that my young and gallant half-cousin has been for some time on the Continent, at his father's instance.

And, by the way, I may also mention here, that Lord Lintern's elder son, whom I had seen in such a high state of excitement at his father's house, the day I called there to complain of the worthy Mr. Wiggins, is a madman: that, upon that occasion, he had broken loose from his keepers; afterwards escaped quite be-

yond their control; and has been recaptured and conveyed back to a place of strong confinement, outside the paternal roof, within the last two months, or rather three or four weeks ago. And all this is deemed a secret in the village, and yet I have heard it.

MORE than four months now spent upon my novel, Graves, and it is half done, and I like it.

But, until it produce something, (if it is ever to do so,)—comforts not encreasing around us.

For example. Our paltry, "ready-furnished house" given up, *as too expensive!* and we living in lodgings of a very, very humble description. Bessy and I but poorly clothed — ay, and fed, in order to keep our father (who still grows worse and worse) supplied with something like generous viands, and a mouthful of wine—poached, smuggled—had in any way—ay, father, in any way!

But, surely, I say to myself, it cannot long be thus. And so, I spin on my pages and pages, and am philosophical,—am I not? But my heart draws comfort from another and a higher source, too. In a passing moment of refined, raw agony, the other day, such as the

bravest of us cannot help, and which perhaps are sent for our good, I flung myself on my knees in my bed-room, burying my face in the bed-covering. It began to be despair with me —it ended in hope. I do not know how—am not conscious of the process of association—but, suddenly, I had an idea that the Almighty God was looking down upon me, from his mysterious throne in Heaven, waiting for me to pray. And I did pray, to the clouded majesty of His tremendous face, and got up from my knees, able to sit down and work.

And very often since, in the middle of the noon day, as well as morning and evening, I pour my trembling confidence into his mighty bosom.

Oh, blessed, thrice blessed be the night when you and I first turned our minds from the flimsy and flippant scepticism of half-informed boyhood, to a search after the proofs of truth, dear Graves!

My love for my poor Bessy returns in all its force. I am sure she has not lately made as free as formerly with Lucy Peat—(who even still is our servant, for reasons previously given). And I say to myself, perhaps my sister saw that tall and stupid coxcomb, upon those occasions, in town, only to bid him farewell, in consequence of our memorable conversation together.

Yet, Bessy continues to embarrass me. I do not indeed wonder to see her look ill,—pale-faced, and heavy-eyed—and neglect her person—: for, to say nothing of her feelings for our situation, the child—(child she almost is)—really goes without good food, and her wardrobe presents few temptations for personal display—and this I have before said—(by the way, the reason why we are able to induce our

sick father to partake of better things than fall to our own lot, is because he is now quite confined to his bed-chamber, and we can take our meals without his observation).

Nor does Bessy's profound and unwearied depression of spirits surprise me, under these circumstances. Sometimes, however, I detect in her, evidences of a passionate and poignant sorrow, which make me think she has her own private causes for misery, apart from our common lot of suffering. I saw her, through the little glass-door of our uncarpeted sitting-room, the other day, kneeling, wringing her hands, and weeping, as if under the pressure of a sudden recurrence of a great fear. Nay, I remember, that about a fortnight after our return from town, the tranquillity and self-content in which, as I have mentioned, she gained home with me, suddenly gave way, even before the last wretched change took place in our circumstances; and as if for some reason known only to herself. A person surprised with the tidings of the unhappy and irremediable termination of circumstances, upon which a bright, and an only hope had been built, might, I suspected, have

been agitated similarly. But surely I only torture appearances into a delusive form. And, indeed, what can I conjecture of sufficient power, really to influence her, as my fancy now and then will have her influenced?

LEST you should say, dear Graves, that I have given up all local sketching for you, I pen down the following, particularly as I have contrived, with my usual good-luck, to figure as an actor in the scene; and more—made an enemy of an influential parish man, in a high-flying attempt to play the philanthropist. Heaven knows how the latter occurrence may yet influence my fortune!

Call to mind the melancholy and curiously-habited and appointed beadle of our parish, of whom I have made slight mention, when describing the riot outside the Anchor inn.

Before that night, I had often encountered him taking his rounds in search of intruding vagrants, gipsies, and sturdy beggars, from other regions, who have not the least right on earth to pass the bounds of his dominion, and who were to be driven into outer darkness,

at the point of his staff of office, the moment they should fall in his way. Of mornings, particularly, I used to meet him, during my own solitary walk in chase of the vagrants of my own imagination, sometimes on the cliff, sometimes on the inland paths of our parish. From the first, he had attracted my observation, my interest, nay, my compassion. He is rather a young man; but his sallow features seem dragged into untimely rigidity, and his brow seems overloaded with care, in the morning of its day, in consequence of the arduous and increasing duties of his office. He walks slowly along, or rather waddles slowly, his head ever bent to his chest, and a parish of responsibility (to him a world) hanging upon his protruded under lip. His hat is a thick, mighty one of coarse felt, three-cocked, according to the eldest and most ponderous fashion, and smeared with brass-thread lace, very deep, and very much tarnished. From his throat to his toes he wears a dark-blue frieze gaberdine, all of one shape in the back, double-caped, cuffed and collared with red, and also made superfluously heavy with faded brass-thread lace. And in his right hand, swinging at his side, and caught in the

middle, so as to be well-balanced, he carries, for ever and ever, what I believe I have called a very curious insignia of his power. It is a short thick stick, painted different colours, but all lively ones, with massive pewter rings, as if of silver, and terminating in a considerable mass of—I believe, block tin, fretted and stamped—to say nothing of bulged and battered—into some exceedingly fine thing, typical of what neither he nor I know much about. You observe, I am rather cautious of even the material of this awful mace; but the fault is not mine. I have more than once endeavoured to make it out, first as I passed him on his walks, next as we strolled on, discoursing gravely, side by side together: but I could not. Once I even requested him to let me touch it; but, although we had been good friends for some time,—no, no; that was not a thing to be done.

Yes: I had resolved to make his acquaintance, and good friends we soon became. From meeting, very often, out in the lonesomest places, this was not difficult. At perhaps our sixth rencounter, he accompanied his usual care-fraught sigh, while passing me, with a pull at his cocked hat, on the part of his left hand.

With much satisfaction I returned his overtures, asked him a question, and, every day since, I think we have longed, like too lovers, that happy fortune might throw us in each other's way once in the twenty-four hours at least.

I listened attentively and sympathizingly to his accounts of the hard lot to which it had been the will of Providence to doom a parish beadle: to his explanation of the multiplied responsibilities of the office; to his illustrations of those duties, separately; and to his modest, though oft-repeated opinion, that from no public functionary do mankind receive more benefit, while none are by them so scantily rewarded. He protested, that it would require a man endowed with the bodily strength and moral courage of ten men, and covered with as many eyes, before and behind, as are displayed in a peacock's tail, to go through his work well—he who had only man's ordinary strength, and only two eyes in his head. Did people think that a matter of six or seven tall gipsies, male and female, never turned on a poor beadle, and he alone with them on a lonesome path, trying to hunt them into the next parish? And though a man was a man, and boys were

boys, suppose ten or twenty young uns caught by him robbing a garden or an orchard, did it stand to reason that he could always beat them off, or drag five or six of them to the cage, single-handed? And how could he see, across many inequalities of land, and more than a mile off, what vagrants might be getting into the parish at one side, while he was routing out others at a different side? And, above all, how could he exactly take notice, among all the young girls of our parish, who was and who was not likely to bring a burden on us—although this duty he was expected most perfectly to perform, in order "that the girl might be had before the magistrate, and an order made on the proper father, in time?"

To all this reasoning I invariably answered in the way he preferred, and our friendship grew and strengthened, day after day.

The other morning I met him on the road leading from the sea to our inland hamlet. He was issuing through the low doorway of a very humble thatched cottage, and the marks of recent trouble were fresh upon his brow. I joined him in his official walk, and the cause of his agitation was soon made known to me, and with

the more readiness, as it proved to be an instance of a new species of inconvenience to which he was constantly subjected.

The inhabitant of the cottage, or, indeed, hovel, was an old man, a pauper, bed-ridden, and unable to do any kind of work; and he fancied that the allowance made to him was not ample enough, though, in truth, it was full as much as young men of thirty, fit for labour of every description, received; and he was continually complaining, and more than that; and he, the beadle, could never pass his door, no matter how pressing his business, that the old pauper did not scream out to him from his bed, and almost always force him to enter the house, his cries were so violent and "hobstropris;" and then, it was nothing but ask, ask, to have his case brought before the committee, and curse, curse, when he was refused.

My beadle fell some steps in my love. I began to question, at least, the soundness of his reasoning-powers: for it struck me that instead of having from the parish only quite as much as a young, strong man of thirty, the screaming old cripple ought to have a great deal more. I turned back to the hovel and entered it.

The moment the old man saw me, he began

to criticise, in no studied phrase, the conduct of the gentlemen of the committee — of whom he chose to suppose me one—of the overseer, and even of the beadle. He represented himself as a native of the parish, born and bred ; as an industrious labourer, who, for his whole life, until he became bed-ridden, had never troubled it for relief ; and now his rage was high against all those who dealt him out his weekly pittance : and with the poor man's scorn and impatience of such assistance, even while he is compelled to accept it, he did not hesitate to imprecate on the subject, and insist on "his right" to more liberal treatment.

Endeavouring to persuade him to qualify his speech and temper, I asked the amount of his allowance ; it was three and sixpence : I certainly concluded, in my own mind that, even comparatively speaking, as my beadle had put the case, it ought to be increased ; and, although I made him no promise, I resolved to go myself to the committee, and intercede for him—a wise resolve, you will say, for a casual resident in the parish, and one not overburdened himself, by the way, with the only thing which is sure to influence such a body, on such occasions—money.

Learning that the committee sat that same day, away to their room, in the workhouse, I went, however—or rather to their room attached to the workhouse. They held their councils, in fact, in what had been the barn of the main building when it had been a farm-house, many years ago: and I found, after gaining their presence, that upon all the days when they left it unoccupied, the place was filled by spinners and wool-pickers—some of the paupers resident in the asylum for the unfortunates of the parish; which fact became evident from the rows of spinning-wheels, and other implements of compulsory industry, pushed back and arranged against the walls.

My good friend, the beadle, stood at the door of the committee-room, zealously engaged in keeping at their proper distance a crowd of applicants for relief. Recognising me, he touched his cocked-hat, and immediately invited me to enter and take a seat; adding, however, that I should have to wait for my turn to address the committee, until after three or four persons, whose names had been announced in the order of their coming, should be heard and disposed of. I thanked him, and went in.

The individual preferring a claim at the mo-

ment of my entry, was Mrs. Brown, our first landlady, at the sea-houses. She stood at the end of a long deal table, confronting the committee and their chairman, who occupied its other end. All her children, I believe, were at her side, or behind her—except her youngest, an infant, which she carried in her arms. The poor woman, at all times, since I had met her, nervous to a great degree, now shook in every limb, her face was ashy pale, her colourless and feverish lips quivered, and tears ran down her cheeks, interrupting her feeble and self-doubting words.

"Oh, dear gentlemen," thus she ended her statement, as I came in, evidently as much in awe and dread of the farmers she addressed, as if they had been the twelve judges; "and it is not to complain of Mas'r Brown I be here, nor to make you angry with him; I 've never said a bitter word of him in my life, and won't begin now; and if the littleuns and myself had not been turned out of our house, yesterday—if we had a roof to try to earn our bread under, the parish would never be troubled with us; and as for him, maybe it bayn't his fault; and I be sure if he had money to bring home with

him, he would come back to us: wouldn't he, Fred, my King?" she continued, stooping to kiss a little fellow of three or four—"you were always his pet, and you know he would."

"Ah, but, Missis," said one of her hearers, "I tell you, Will Brown be living, this moment, in Hastings, in full work, with Harriet Stone to keep house for him—and when I say that, I know what I say;—I be overseer of this parish, and don't say things without sure grounds; and I tell you, moreover, that the day we can lay hands on him, he shall support his wife and his children, or go a-treading."

"Oh, Mr. White, I be sure you always take care to get the best information; but indeed, Sir, some one has wronged Mas'r Brown to you, this time; indeed, indeed, some one has!" and the faithful and meek creature wept loudly.

"Well, Missis, we shall see; for the present, you have heard what the gentlemen say to you; here be the work'us open to you and your little ones, great and little, if you choose to come in, and try your hand with them at whatever employment we can give you; if you do not, four shillings a week is the outside of what can be allowed to you and them."

The poor petitioner sighed as if her heart would break, looked at her children, and then on the ground, before she replied.

"As I 'm a living born woman, standing here before you, gentlemen, 'tisn't a dislike to work as hard as you can wish us, that makes me unwilling to come into the house: no; but 'tis ———"

"Oh, the shame, to be sure," interrupted the overseer; "we all know that."

"It is, then—but more for their sakes—and for their father's sake, than for my own—oh, what would he say to me if I consented to give up *his* children without another struggle, at any rate!"

"Well, well; all 's said that can be said; good day, Missis—Beadle, send in Alice French."

Mrs. Brown curtsied to the floor, and again sighing piteously, withdrew, followed by her children.

The last of the train were pushed aside, as was also the officiating Beadle himself, by the claimant who now entered—Alice French.

She was an elderly woman of considerable stature, bulky, red-armed, red-faced, very broad at the hips, and looking as strong as a horse, and

as cross—as constitutionally cross—as a thing she little resembled otherwise, namely a bilious Nabob. She carried a tin milk-can in her hand, half full of milk; and after hurrying across the floor, in a kind of striding waddle, this she slapt down on the table, so smartly that the milk spattered out at the sides of the lid, as she began—

"So, now for it, over again, gentlemen."

"Ay, now for it, over again, dame," laughed a young and good-humoured looking farmer.

"Don't 'dame' me, Mas'r Gaddidge, and I often told you as much afore now: my name be Alice French—or, if you like to be civil, Miss's French—what no one refused to call me as long as my husband was alive."

"Well, Miss's French, and what's your business with us to-day?"

"And don't *you* know?" counter-queried Alice; "it would be time if you did, however; my business be to get my shilling a-week, to help pay my rent, since you will do no more for a poor, sickly widow, like me."

"Tut, tut, dame, that's an old story," said the overseer, "and you have had your answer, long ago."

"Mas'r White," resumed the claimant, frowning wickedly at him; "don't you go for to be wapsy with me, what you always be; I wun't be called dame, I tell you, by you, or any of your committee, either; pay me my shilling a-week, and that be all what 's between us."

"Why, Missis," said young Gaddidge, winking at the overseer to be silent, "we cannot possibly think you stand in need of any assistance from the parish;" obviously he enjoyed the character and the periodical visits of the always repulsed, but never daunted Alice.

"Then I be a story-teller, be I?" she demanded, chopping her logic very short.

"I haven't said so, but your hands are always full of work, and you get well paid for it."

"What work, Mas'r Gaddidge?"—It is to be observed, that in her wrath against the committee, she would not concede to one of them the "Mr." which might tacitly acknowledge their claims to be called—what they called themselves—gentlemen. "What work, Mas'r?"

"Why, first of all, look at your tin, there."

"Eighteen-pence a week for serving milk to all my sister's customers, morning and evening,

every day in the week!" ejaculated Mrs. French, "and that be what you call being well paid?"

"But your mangle isn't often idle," observed the overseer.

"My mangle?—maybe you sit on your heels outside my window, to watch when I be turning of it, Mas'r White? My mangle! farthing a piece for babies' caps, the few that I get to do of un."

"You never leave a great folk's kitchen, in the parish, till you worry the servants out of a load of things—halves of turkeys, and fowls, slices of bacon, and all such like," remonstrated another of the committee, who had taken up Gaddidge's vein of humour.

"And sells un to her sister, and other neighbours, when she gets home," added a third.

"From a penny to threepence a scrap! from a penny to threepence! I be blowed, gentlemen, if I ever makes more on 'em, and that not oftener than once a fortnight!" This last was a home-thrust, because a new one, which alarmed Alice's conscience a little, and disarmed her of her defiance, for a moment.

"To say nothing of a shilling a month,

sacrament-money, from Dr. Baily," continued young Gaddidge.

"Well, and don't I earn it? if that mere nothing be a thing to aggravate on, don't I earn it?"

"How so?" asked her chief tormenter.

"How so?—what do you call walking a good two miles of ground, up hill, once a month, for a woman of my years, and so stout and so weakly as I be, at the same time? be that nothing, just to obleege him?—And then, doesn't he get his full shilling's worth out of me, after church be over, making company o' me, in his parlour, to hear me tell 'fore right to his face, all the news I can pick up for him, in the parish, high and low, since the last past monthly Sunday?"

Here was a general laugh at this announcement of the good rector's innocent love of parish gossip: Alice did not join, however, in the mirth around her; on the contrary, her ever severe brow grew more severe, as she again demanded her shilling a week "to help 'pay her rent."

"Nonsense, woman; you get no shilling here, and you've often been told so: go about your business, and earn it yourself, what you

are well able to do," said the overseer; "I be overseer of this parish, and bound to know who are entitled, and who are not; and when I say so, I go on sure grounds."

She had been preparing for a vast burst of recrimination, while he spoke: he had scarce ended when the first gust of the storm arose; but he cut her short, calling out to the beadle to remove her.—"Remove me!" echoed Alice; "I should like see him try, if *I* liked stop here; or you either, Mas'r White; but I be going of my own accord." She snatched up her tin, turned her back abruptly on them, waddled to the door, stopped inside its threshold, and added—"I be going; but I'll come back, among you, ay, every committee-day till I have that shilling, or know for why; the poor, the industrious poor of this parish be robbed—I be blowed if they bayn't!"

"No such words as those, to the gentlemen, dame, or you shall trudge to the tread-mill," cried the overseer.

"Tread-mill, and 'dame,' over again;—and *gentlemen!—That* for your *gentlemen!*"—and ere she finally disappeared, Alice spat shortly on the floor, and scraped her foot quickly, twice or thrice, her side turned to the committee.

"John Simmons," called the overseer, the moment she had withdrawn: and John Simmons strode in, his hands thrust into the pockets of his wide, fisherman's trousers, and his heavy-featured face poking downward.

"All we can say to you, Simmons, is this; if things go on so badly as you tell us, come into the house at once, and so assist your family."

The man shuffled on his outspread legs, shook his head, and was silent.

"Then, there's only one other thing; turn convict," (meaning, I know not by what latitude of speech, that John Simmons was to draw sand and boulders from the beach, in a little cart, to mend the roads and pathways).

"And what am I to get for turning convic' —for turning myself into a beast of burden?" demanded the applicant, without looking up.

"Four shillings a week."

"Then I be blowed if I do, gentlemen," he resumed; "four shillings a week for slaving twelve hours a day!—No. Better starve till the fishing comes round again. This be the second time I was offered your four shillings; and the first time I troubled you, years ago, was

after all *honest* trades failed—remember that"—and he strode out.

A wretched-looking wayfarer, an "operative" of some kind, I concluded, now entered, supporting his wife, who was large with child, and so feeble, if not so pained, as to be unable to walk unassisted. The husband looked from her to the committee with a miserable face of distress and supplication.

"Nothing to be done but what I 've already told you," said the overseer to him,—"get to your parish, you and she, as fast as possible; our cart is at your service: so, go along, and lose no time."

"Our parish is upwards of eighty miles off," urged the man, "and you see her condition."

"We cannot help that; we have not removed you from your parish, nor your parish from you—and we can do no more than the duty laid down for us."

"And she *is* to be carted off in this state?" asked the husband, his meagre and hitherto humble face, now darkening to indignation.

"She *must*—we cannot run the risk of a strange woman and child becoming burdensome to us; we 've enough of our own to provide

for. So, make the best of your time, I advise you; the constable has the cart ready for you."

"Come then, Mary," said the man, "and if this be parish law, the great, and the rich, and the wise, who have framed it for us, ought to sit in parish committee-rooms, oftener than they do, to see it put in force—that's all I say."

After he had assisted his wife through the door, no one immediately entered, and so, deeming myself at liberty to prefer *my* petition, I approached to the table, and stated it in a few words.

It was met with general indifference, if not contempt. But the overseer treated it, and indeed me, with peculiar bluntness. He ridiculed the complaints of my old client, and also the idle interference of people who really could have no sufficient opportunity of forming opinions on such subjects; none, at least, equal to those enjoyed by the overseer of that parish, who, "when he said so, went on sure grounds."

I replied, superfluously, no doubt, for the words and manner of the parish tyrant, and his glances at my indifferent attire, *did* work me, as usual. He retorted in a tone of distinct insolence. He reminded me again that he was over-

seer of that parish, and, more than that, an independent man; an independent man, who did not care a crooked rush about any other man, rich or poor, in England; and a man *who paid as he went;* (and here he spoke expressively,) and one who *when he fared on game* of any kind, shot it with his own gun, and his dogs at his side, and his licence in his pocket; and one who paid the King's duty on *all the wines he drank;* and he wondered at a stranger in a parish interfering in the business of a parish;—at least, when such a stranger was not one of the greatest and richest folk we had in the country, far and near.

I am angry, very angry with myself, dear Graves, for the manner in which I resented the fellow's attempt to insult me. However, I did utter language which made him red in the face, and brought him swaggering and bullying up to my nose, and at last obtained me the peremptory order of the whole committee, along with him, to leave the barn. "Look to your own concerns at home, Mister," were the last words the overseer muttered into my ear as I left him, "they'll find you parish work enough, maybe;" and I concluded that he alluded again to my

buying poached game and smuggled wines of Sam Geeson, the apprentice, however he had come by his knowledge.

—Could he have meant any thing else?

But I had not yet done with him for that day.

I took a long ramble to allow my chagrin to evaporate; and returning homeward, in the dusk of the evening, encountered a crowd of people flinging stones at the windows of a house outside the hamlet. Upon inquiry, I learned that it was *his* house, and that the people were paupers, discontented with his parish proceedings, and thus expressing their good-will. They groaned for him, and, in no measured terms, accused him of wronging the poor: and they quoted, as an instance of his hard-heartedness, the fact of his having that day sent the poor woman in the cart, to—or rather towards—her remote parish. They did not fail to couple with their animadversions, abuse of parish laws as well as parish officers—but here I digress a moment to give you a striking instance of how the very system they were inveighing against had curdled the charity of their own hearts.

I had scarce joined their outskirts when a very miserable creature, who had lately been

turned out of an hospital, in a near town, after the amputation of one of his legs, dragged himself on his crutches to my side, and sat down on the pathway. I questioned him. He gave me the information I have given you, adding that his remnant of a leg had begun to get inflamed; that he feared he could not hobble much farther homeward without going into some other hospital. I put my hand into my pocket in search of a penny. Some half-dozen of the rioters were within hearing of our conversation, and now witnessing my alms-giving preparations, and feeling jealous, no doubt, of an interloper, according to law, cried out, "Don't, Sir, don't —help your own poor—let him go to his parish."

"But he can't go," I remarked; "look," and I pointed to his stump, to his glassy eyes, and to the perspiration which teemed from his forehead.

"Oh, that be all nons'ns—let him go to his parish," was their reply, as they turned to groan anew at the overseer.

I own I did not at first speak a word to induce them to act more peaceably. But when Mr. White, throwing up a window, informed

them that he had sent for the constables, and that they were beasts and savages to attack his house, *and his daughter, to their knowledge, nearly breathing her last*, my feelings suddenly changed, and I went among them, and used what oratory I could.

Again, however, my mind changed towards the overseer; and, I think, for sufficient reasons.

"And I see *you*, too, Mister," he cried out, addressing himself to me, "*you*, Mr. Mutford, I mean—and I have seen you, some minutes back, encouraging these people to a breach of the peace—yes, Sir—and I'll not forget it to you, no more than your language to-day in the committee room."

I walked rapidly out of the crowd, without condescending to reply, and left them to do as they pleased. And what they *did* please to do, Graves, as I have been informed, I add with melancholy disgust against the state of the parish legislation which could have provoked them so to disgrace human nature. Poor White's only daughter, (do I not forgive the man, now?) *was* ill, *was* dying; and they knew it, as he had said; and, that night, she died; and, some hours after the sad event, the debased

beings reassembled before his house, and lighted a bonfire, and let off squibs and crackers. I state a wretched fact, upon undoubted authority.

But here you have an account of the parish great man whose enmity I have aroused, as well as a detail of the circumstances which brought me into contact with him.

AFTER all, Graves, the power of suffering—or rather the talent of enduring what we call affliction, is to be gained, like every other talent, by practice. That, at least, is the faith in which I will die. What do I particularly mean now? I proceed to inform you: requesting you to remark that I have not been so quiescent this long while as I feel to-day.

First, learn, that the intimacy between us and your brother has been in a great measure broken up since some days before I went to London with Bessy: and now I may mention why, although I have hitherto passed the subject.

The why is easily and shortly stated,—your brother did Bessy the high and unexpected honour of proposing for her, and she rejected him. And, upon that, he told me he would discontinue his visits, at our humble abode,

for the purpose of reconciling his mind to the disappointment. Meantime, I might call on him, whenever I should feel disposed to afford him so great a pleasure. I did not go, at all, however; giving as a reason to my own inconsistent breast, that the less he saw of any of us, the sooner and the more effectually could he accomplish his purpose of forgetting.

We have since met, accidentally, notwithstanding, and chatted together as cordially as ever—(shall I own the truth? I was and am glad that he has kept away from us, of late—I should not like to have received him in our new lodgings). And this morning, before breakfast, we encountered each other again, at the sea-side. He was on his way to the circulating library, (which, according to poor old Moffit, confers its title on "the Parade,") to look over the newspapers. We gossiped a moment, walking up to the door of the manifold establishment. He asked me to step in with him; I demurred, stating that I was not a subscriber to the newsroom. That was nothing, he said; I could sit down and wait for him just half a minute, while he skimmed over one paper, only. I did as he wished, placing myself at the table, so as to

convince the proprietor and his showy daughters that I had no plan of gleaning a line of news, surreptitiously, over the shoulders of any of their entitled visitors; one line of one of the papers, however, did meet my eye, owing to the fidgets of the old gentleman who perused the "folio of four pages," and who *would* thrust under my nose, now one corner, now another of it. And that line completed an announcement of the failure of the bankers in whose hands my father had placed his little —and his last—earthly property. So that, Graves, we are now literally beggars, my man; or indeed, some degrees below that respectable class of men and women, inasmuch as we owe money, and have none.

What think you of my opening proposition of this morning?

I have just returned from my father's bed-chamber, after breaking to him, as gently as I could, the agreeable tidings. He fainted on his pillow; Bessy and I succeeded in restoring him, and I now go out for his medical attendant—that is to say, the village apothecary.

I RESUME after a lapse of twenty-four hours, to put something in the journal, which perhaps explains more fully than I have previously ventured to do, the advice of the overseer to "look after my own affairs, at home."

You may decide, as you think fit, whether the determination to write a long and conquering chapter of my novel was the sole thing that kept me out of bed, last night; I only say that I sat in my room, writing hard. At about two o'clock this morning, after returning from administering a draught to my father—(concerning whom our Galen shakes his head, by the way,) my high imaginings were interrupted by, methought, a gentle tapping at the little kitchen-window under me. I stepped out, softly, to the lobby, and distinctly heard the signal repeated. Presently, Lucy Peat (whose nightly couch is prepared in the kitchen) unfastened

the window, and, I concluded, passed into our back yard. From a favourable peep-hole at the rear of the cottage, I continued my observations; Lucy certainly appeared in the sharp, wintry moon-light, stealthily walking beside a man of great bulk, as well as unusual height, who, though I saw only his back, I was convinced at a glance, could not be—Sam Geeson.

This discovery made me over-curious, and I unwisely resolved to see the face of the new lover, as well as to catch a few of his words, if possible. The pair stopped in the shadow of a frail shed, in the garden, or, indeed, yard, which I knew could be gained by issuing through our front door into the street or road, doubling down that road, and then entering the rear of our premises by an open gateway; and, accordingly in a few seconds, nothing but a screen of chinky planks divided me from my "minions of the moon."

Using the utmost precaution, I applied my eye to a crack, and its retina was directly painted with the inverted image of the face and person of Mas'r Fox's earthly idol, Mr. Boakes. There was no mistaking him for an instant; he fronted me, and a treacherous ray of the planet

of frail vows struck vividly upon his memorable features. He was earnestly impressing Lucy Peat with the necessity, the worthiness, and the moral beauty of laying his second child, of which I now understand she was pregnant, at the door of the same individual with whom she had complimented his first—namely, Samuel Geeson; and thus, he, Mr. Boakes, would be saved from the short-sighted and unjustified misconstructions of the world, as well as from the fire-side remarks of Mrs. Boakes—whose health, by the way, still grew worse, he said, and thus, also, she, Lucy, would be saved from much public persecution, and, perhaps, flax-spinning, or wool-picking, fourteen hours a day in the workhouse; and, to support poor Lucy in his long-formed resolutions to adopt this course, the stout gallant handed unto her the bank notes which she had demanded of him, and which, he remarked, she need not have used so much threat to obtain; and his exhortation ended by reminding Lucy that, so soon as Samuel Geeson should wed her, in consequence of his supposed two children entitling him to a claim on the parish, then would arise an opportunity———

"I be jiggered if there do, tho', Mas'r Boakes," here interrupted a voice from the deep darkness in a remote corner of the shed in which I stood. Boakes instantly pressed down his hat into his eyes, pulled up the collar of his great coat, and disappeared in one direction, and Lucy Peat, with the fleetness and dexterity of a cat, startled in a similar scene, flew to her back-window, and clambered through it.

"Sam Geeson?" I demanded, speaking cautiously towards the dark corner. I was answered with a happy laugh, and an admission of identity. And then, drawing close to me, the apprentice congratulated himself, heartily, upon the conversation we had both overheard; adding, that all along he had suspected his betrothed Lucy, but, until the present hour, never could come by the necessary proof; to-night, however, after watching and "managing on the sly" a good while, he had been successful; and again he wished himself joy at being freed of a wife, and another man's two children, in the dawning of his youth.

"It be an escape, Sir, bayn't it?" asked Sam, "and we only waiting, as Boakes hisself said, for the second young un, to marry, and

have a little help from the parish? I be blowed, Mr. Mutford, but what you must have the next hare and bottle gratis, for this, and for the good luck of being here, so near me, too."

I asked him, in a disagreeable omen, to explain the latter part of his speech; but he jocosely, (that is, in his way,) evaded my question, and, wishing me a "good night," hurried from the outhouse.

And so ended my little nocturnal adventure, which I report for you, Graves, the very first thing this morning. Now a gulp of fresh air, out by the sea: the want of sleep, if nothing else, makes me heavy.

Nine o'clock, forenoon.

THE occurrences of last night, dear Graves, involved me — *us* — in very annoying consequences, as I had half anticipated; nay, to a greater extent than I could have feared.——

God send that I see to the end of them!——

When I came back from my ramble I found our house in the utmost confusion. My friend, the beadle, whispering with groups of people, was at the door, and loud voices sounded above stairs. I gained the little sitting-room outside my father's bed-chamber. Lucy Peat sat sulky and sobbing on a chair; Mr. White, the overseer, stood at my father's door, speaking in to him in his bed; and my sister Bessy, trembling and weeping too, appeared inside its threshold, vainly urging the man of power to withdraw.

"I have nothing—can have nothing to do with the shameful matter, but to tell you—to

command you to take the vile girl out of this house directly, Mr. Overseer," said my poor father, his faint and broken voice raised to—beyond—its utmost natural pitch.

" Be a little more merciful to me, master, or you may be sorry you were not," muttered Lucy.

" And never, never let her see the face of my child again, Sir," continued my father; " never, I mean, never let her come into our presence again."

" Pho, now," scoffed Lucy, checking her sobs, " is that to be it, Miss Bessy?—you 'll make favour for me, won't you, Miss?"

So far I had witnessed the scene without interfering. Indignation, as well as astonishment, kept me silent and motionless. Now I advanced to Mr. White, and desired him, whatever might be his business, to withdraw in my company from my father's door, and explain it to me. Perhaps I mixed up with my request some words that served to add to the man's former bitterness against me; for he retorted upon me in a loud and brawling voice, and it was not till my commands arose into distinct threats of putting a pistol to his head, I believe,

that he consented to go down stairs, taking Lucy Peat carefully with him.

In the little hall, he gave me to understand that in consequence of my maid (maid!) servant having neglected a civil intimation from him to affiliate the child of which she was at present pregnant, he had come, with the beadle, to compel her attendance before the magistrate. "We shall want *your* attendance, also, on the occasion, Sir, at one o'clock, to-day," he added.

"Me? what can I have to do with the subject?"—

"The man against whom she has expressed her intention to make the charge, summonses you as a witness in his favour," sneered the overseer—"Beadle, hand Mr. Mutford the summons." And my beadle accordingly stepped forward, and gave me the paper.

"Well," I said, "I must obey, I suppose; and so, your business being ended, you will please to leave this house, instantly, and with as little noise as possible: your vulgar brawling in it has already gone too far."

"Vulgar?—what a pity in such a nice, genteel house! I fear we spoiled the Turkey-carpet, up-stairs:—come, Lucy—" sneered the overseer.

"I be a-coming," answered Lucy, sullenly and pertly—"Mr. Michael, a word with you, first—"

Before I could withdraw, or otherwise avoid her, the girl came close to me, and asked in a whisper ——"Be you for upholding Sam Geeson, Sir, in fore-right earnest?"—

"I must speak the truth," I answered.

"Don't, though, Mr. Michael," she resumed, fixing her eyes on me, and nodding.

"And how durst you offer me such an advice?" I said, loudly.

"I durst and I dare nothing, Sir; I only say again, don't—and you understand me well enough."

"No—I can only understand that you are saucy and impertinent, as well as depraved, Lucy."

"Then you be a greater fool than I took you for, *if* you cannot guess my meaning, Mr. Michael; as to saucy,—and depraved—because —come, come, Sir, I tell you, a third time—don't."

"Take her away," I cried to the overseer—"do your duty, here, and free me of this creature—and I will do my duty at the magistrate's."

"Well, then, only another word——and, on your life, listen to me!"—she continued to whisper—"say a tittle of what you saw and heard last night, and—by my soul and body! I will pay you tit for tat!"—and she took the beadle's arm, and they all left the house.

I presume that Miss Lucy's tit-for-tat is to be an attempt, by hard swearing on her own part, as well as on the part of credible witnesses, that 'tis neither Sam Geeson nor Mr. Boakes, but *I*, and I only. We shall see. Her silly threat will not keep me from giving my honest aid to punish, as they merit, by exposure, herself and that blubber-headed hypocrite, Boakes. So, I leave you, Graves, to proceed to the magistrate, —ay, to stand again before his face, though I hate it. Remember that I shall stand before it for the first time, *as* an object of hate——.

Hate? hate? I fear I am not as good a Christian as, a few weeks ago, I was. Well, I will kneel down before I set out. Farewell!

—— † By the Omnipotent! By hell, heaven, and the putrid earth!—oh, mercy, mercy, God! —lay it not upon me so very, very heavy!— Graves! Graves! only friend! Oh, I wish I could weep!—you will see drops upon this paper—but not tears—they fall from my bitten lips!—Graves!——no, no, I cannot!—

* * * *

—And yet—from my prostrate—grovelling agony upon the floor, again I bound up to—— —— Graves! in the outrageous, fireside-blasting, and heart-tearing operation of *that law*, I have been doomed to be accurst, from eternity! —and in every relation of life!—in all belonging to me, as well as in myself!———

† These are the last words Mutford ever wrote in his Journal—they must have escaped his pen, almost unconsciously, immediately after he ran home from the magistrate's.

"—Ay, scream, there, within his chamber, Bessy, my little sister!—in the chamber that *was* his!—scream! scream! scream! I like that key of your voice!—it soothes my brain, as dulcet music! and it will not disturb *him!*—scream!—Graves, she lies screaming on his dead and stiff body!—But that is little!—(I live to say it)—she who does so—my only sister—now my only living kin—is—is—

"Ha, ha, Graves!—her confidant *has* paid me tit-for-tat!—punctually and fully paid me. Before Lintern's face, too, and he to strike a balance between us! and before my overseer and my beadle—before the world, yea, there, and so, she has paid me!

"Ha, ha! old fellow! Graves!—within the last hour I have seen her—my sister Bessy, I mean—brought—dragged—into his magisterial-room—upon an accusation which she denied not—Ay! I was right, all along—ay, it needed not even the school-mistress to give me suspicions and fears—although I suppressed them—flung them down—stamped them down,—or I thought I had.

"Ay!—and this *was* their concerted plan of vengeance, of extermination—upon us!—and has it not worked well? Has it not?

"Its immediate perpetrator sent out of my reach, too! to the Continent—all the way!—That, also, was an admirable contrivance!—As if I could not trace him! Pennyless though I be, as if I could not! as if I will not! Yea, without food or raiment!—First—out of this—out of this with her!—For we must, Graves, though I walk with *her* in my arms—Why?—reason good.

"Recollect the answer given to the man and woman in the Committee-room.

"IT IS NOT OUR PARISH!

"Again, Bessy, my gentle simple sister! again and again!

"But, leave the corpse, now. The first thing we have to do is—to bury it."

Continuing in the third person, it will first be convenient to give some more satisfactory account of the proceedings at Lord Lintern's. than that to be inferred from Mutford's allusions.

When Mutford gained the magistrate's presence, by appointment, at one o'clock, he found there before him the overseer, Lucy Peat, the beadle, and Sam Geeson. The inquiry had commenced; Lucy had made her declarations of the accountability of the young apprentice; and Sam had just entered upon his defence. Seeing Mutford, he continued.

"As yet I've mentioned no names, your worship, waiting for my witness; here be he, now, and will just tell you who he saw and heard speaking with her last night, and what they said between 'em."

Lord Lintern—without a recognition passing

between him and his late correspondent—called on Mutford to advance and speak. He did so, in a matter-of-course manner, as if he had never before seen or heard of his lordship. The moment he came in, Lucy Peat turned her head quickly, and fixed her eyes on his face. As he prepared to speak, she dropped sitting on a chair. He began his statement on oath, and she drew in her under-lip, looked down, shook her head slightly two or three times, and patted her foot on the carpet. He ended, and she rose up again, and asked, "And now you be done, Mr. Michael?"

Mutford replied that he had no more to say.

"Very well, Sir. 'Tis enough, maybe. My turn next—. But think of yourself, Sir—try if there be nothing at all more, what you'd like to give out? not a single word?"

He repeated his denial, and the magistrate authoritatively and sternly commanded her to proceed without delay in whatever attempt she was about to make to rebut his evidence.

"Do, Lucy," grinned Geeson.

"I will, your worship," she answered, nodding expressively towards Lord Lintern, and not condescending to take the least notice of her

late admirer—"I will, and to your lordship's satisfaction, as well as to Mr. Michael Mutford's; you shall both be very glad for having put me upon my last defence—that I promise you;—and I only ask a little time, just as much as it will take Mr. White, here, to trot his horse down to the village, and sure I won't be refused the favour? Mr. White, let me whisper a word in your ear before you go."

Suddenly conceding to herself her own request, she bent the overseer's head to her lips, and made him some brief communication. He started in great surprise; then, glancing at Mutford, a glow of gross gratification and triumph came over his features; and then he spoke to the magistrate.

"The girl says true, my lord; it is quite necessary for me, in the discharge of my duty, to hasten directly to the village; I will be back in a very short time."

The magistrate assented. Mr. White, after another glance at Mutford, hurried out of the apartment, and the following instant was heard—not merely trotting, as Lucy had promised for him—but galloping hard down the avenue.

"Until his return," resumed Lord Lintern,

" you, Lucy Peat, and you, Geeson, in the custody of the beadle, shall wait without; and you, Sir," addressing Mutford, " while I attend to other business, in another part of the house, can rest here, if you please,"—and rising from his seat, he withdrew.

Mutford, principally because his place of waiting had been pointed out to him, would not stay in the library. As soon as Lord Lintern disappeared, he also gained the hall, and without noticing the other parties, or waiting for their movements, went out through the open hall door, and strolled down an evergreen shrubbery to one side of the lawn. Terminating the broad path before him, he saw, after curving in his walk, the small but solidly built stone edifice which he had remarked on a former occasion, and which was in a degree memorable to him since his first notice of it. It had a flight of steps, ascending to its entrance, and running the whole length of its front; and that front was of a tasty style of architecture, of an old date, and partially ornamented with cut stone. At one time, more than one door led into it, if, indeed, almost the whole of the lower part of the front had not been open, as some old greenhouses are

contrived; but at present, fresh mason-work, filled up those original spaces, all but one doorway, in the middle of the little building, which was supplied with a substantial door, closely shut, and one small window, traversed, upon the outside, by thick iron bars.

From the library of the magistrate, Mutford had previously seen but a side of the solitary building; neither could its front be observed without entering and advancing some distance in the shrubbery in which he now was. Nor had he at once come in sight of it, after passing into the shadow of the evergreens. As has been noticed, the path curved ere he perceived it; and nearly for half an hour before, he had sat on a rustic chair, his mind occupied with conjectures as to Lucy Peat's mode of defence—and his soul now and then sinking within him as a hideous fear—shaken off, however—stirred, like a loathsome reptile getting life, in its depths. And when Mutford did arrive in view of the prison—for, prison it was—something happened to add to his former curiosity concerning it. He heard his own name pronounced twice or thrice, in a vehement manner, although the speaker endeavoured to use a suppressed voice—almost,

indeed, a whisper. At this moment he was about forty yards from the building. Glancing steadfastly to it, he saw a face inside the iron bars of the single window, and hands waving rapidly, as if to call him on. He quickened his pace; and still the voice pronounced his name, now adding—"For life and death! for life and death, Mutford! one word,—one word! and run, run—or we shall be interrupted!—nay, the guard is already alarmed—run!—"

Sharing the excitement in which he was thus addressed, Mutford did begin to run, when the bushes to his right were rudely broken through, and a powerfully built man jumped out on the path between him and the person whom he now knew to be Augustus Allan.

"You must return, Sir, by the way you came," said the intruder—"hollo!" calling loudly to the building—"I say, Huckle!—look to the window!—go back, Sir,—leave this shrubbery altogether—Lord Lintern allows no one to walk in it—not even his friends, let alone a stranger—so, back, back!"

The man advanced on Mutford, and while doing so, his friend Huckle quickly appeared through the barred window, forcing Augustus

Allan from it. The youth exclaimed loudly and passionately, but in vain; in a few seconds, Mutford lost sight of him and his keeper; and in a few more not even the sound of his voice was heard, however he had been silenced. And still the second keeper closed upon Mutford, in a hostile as well as insolent manner, and our friend, unprepared, at all times, to submit to such despotism, was going to remonstrate, but another matter drew his attention. The noise of galloping horses and fast rattling wheels came up the avenue, mixed with the low but agonized lament of a female voice. Mutford, clasping his hands, though not uttering a word, turned and raced down the shrubbery. He gained a view of the hall door of Lord Lintern's mansion, and saw the overseer taking his sister Bessy out of Mas'r Fox's fly. The following instant, he had pushed the parish king aside, and caught up Bessy in his own arms.

"Have a care," said the overseer — "handle her more gently; you may hurt her."

"Scoundrel! what do you mean by that? what do you mean by all you have done, as well as by what you now say?—But no matter—'tis not to you I appeal—follow us!"—

He ran into the library, still carrying Bessy; and, perceiving the magistrate and Geeson, Lucy Peat and the beadle re-assembled in it, had scarce cleared the door when he began a loud and incoherent complaint against the overseer, and a demand for justice.

Lord Lintern, surprised, perhaps softened out of much of his usual cold sternness, assured him he should find ample protection for himself and his sister; and the old man even arose, placed a chair for Bessy, and waited till she should be seated.

Mutford put her down, and proceeded to place her in the chair. All through this scene, her low, heart-breaking cries had continued, and, without clinging to her brother, she had hid her face in his bosom. Now, the instant that she sat on the chair, and that Lord Lintern had returned to his, Bessy sprang up, ran forward, and dropped, as if almost unconsciously, at his feet, covering her face with her hands.

"What *is* the matter, Bessy?"—cried Mutford, following her slowly, and once more raising her: — "come, come," he continued, bearing her back to her chair, "sit down, I command you, and let us have justice done,

whatever it may turn out to be;—there—sit still—" He placed a hand on her shoulder—she seemed to shiver and shrink under his touch, and still covered her bent face with her hands—"Now, my lord?" he added, turning to Lord Lintern.

"Is this the witness you have sent for by the overseer?" demanded the magistrate, addressing Lucy Peat: at the first sound of his voice Bessy stilled her cries, and seemed to listen fearfully, while every limb trembled.

"This young lady *is* my witness," answered Lucy. "Miss Bessy," addressing her unhappy young mistress—"I do not bring you here of my own free accord; thank your wise brother for it, more than you blame me; had he held back from ruining me, this morning, I should never have opened my lips—although, to tell the truth, I be not much in your own debt of late; that is, since you made up your mind to tell me no more about the young gentleman, nor let me speak to you about him———"

"Wretched creature!" exclaimed Mutford, glancing a ghastly look of rage at the speaker.

"Maybe I be—maybe I bay'nt, Mas'r Michael;—this much I'd have you learn, how-

somever; it was you I blamed for Miss Bessy giving herself airs, and making me know my distance, when it grew too late to begin the lesson—you and not she; for I happened to overhear your lectures to her, some months ago;—ay, and I own she abided by them, and ever since strove to blind me and baffle me, *in that business;* but I kept my eyes in my head, and I don't think she has been too many for me, after all."

Again Mutford gave vent to an incoherent ejaculation; and Lord Lintern commanded Lucy to come to the point.

"Ay, to the point — common prostitute!" echoed Mutford, injudiciously, if nothing else.

"Don't call me names," retorted Lucy, her cheeks fading, and her brow blackening to the hues of deep malignity—"at least, don't call *me* any that you had rather not call—*her*."

"You must retire, this moment, or say what you have to say, at once," resumed Lord Lintern.

"This it is at once then, my lord," volunteered the overseer, while poor Mutford's brain and eyes began to swim, and Bessy's tremblings increased till her teeth chattered — "that 'ere

girl, too," pointing to Bessy, "is here on the same business what brings this here girl, Lucy Peat, before you."

"That is" — said Lord Lintern, appearing puzzled, and he paused.

"That is, she will have to tell your worship the name of her own child's father," added Lucy, nodding towards the magistrate.

She had scarce uttered these words, when, at the same instant, cries of different expressions escaped the brother and the sister, and the former rushed headlong out of the room, and the latter a second time tottered to Lord Lintern, and sank, as if in paralysis, at his feet.

The old despot, to do him justice, showed some feeling. He stooped, and attempted to raise Bessy, as he said,—"Is it possible?—Is it true! — poor young woman! tell me, is it?"

Bessy, resisting his endeavours to place her on her feet, only renewed her pitiable moans of lamentation.

"It is true, your worship; and she won't go for to deny it; she doesn't; if she does, 'tis easy to prove it," observed Lucy Peat.

"And, for revenge, then, and not to vindicate yourself, vile girl, you have sent for this

unhappy young person?" demanded Lord Lintern.

"A little for revenge, I own; but chiefly because I thought that when your worship should hear all about *her* little misfortune, you might be inclined not to deal too hardly, as you promised, with *me*, on the head of my mistake about Sam Geeson."

"I have heard all that can be said on it, and still resolve not to spare you," answered the magistrate.

"Wait; stop a bit," resumed Lucy; "your worship has *not* heard all that can be said on it; she will have to tell you the father's name, yet; just ask her that, will you, my Lord?"

"Oh, I *will* tell you, Lord Lintern, I will tell you;" sobbed Betsy, her voice scarce audible; "I have made up my mind to tell you—ay, although I may seem to break through a solemn vow not to do so—a solemn oath I should say. But oh, merciful Heaven! is it in this situation you are to hear the avowal from me! Oh, has it come to this! can poverty—poverty only, sink me so very, very low—make me an object for the care of that parish overseer—subject me to be forced, by him, from my father's side—my

sick, dying father! subject me to be placed here, by the elbow of that wicked, wicked girl; no, no, no!—I cannot tell you! I never will! —never,—here, never, in this plight!" And Bessy, who had uttered these words at intervals, without exposing her face, now lay almost prostrate on the floor.

"If *I*, or a girl like me, refused to tell, your worship would talk of the tread-mill," observed Lucy Peat.

"And I see no difference," urged the overseer, "between the cases of the two girls; this Miss Bessy, for all the pretensions of herself and her family gentility, as it were, are pennyless and friendless wanderers into the parish, deuce knows from where; ay, and not well conducted or orderly people, one of them, either —as Sam Geeson, there, could tell your worship, if he were not shy of speaking out on his own account; and so, for my part—and when I say it I go on sure grounds—I don't understand why Bessy Mutford should be spared the tread-mill, for contempt of your worship's authority, no more than Lucy Peat."

Bessy suddenly sprang up, stood erect before her judge, wiping away her tears, and pushing

aside her hair from her face with both her hands; and she spoke again in a comparatively firm tone.

"Lord Lintern, save me from this—from this terrible outrage! from the terrible insult of that man's words!—save me from it, as I am a lady, though — they indeed truly say—a poor one: as I am my father's daughter! as —as—but my other reasons you shall learn for your private information—pray let me have a pen, and a slip of paper—yes—I *will* declare the father of my child!—Thanks, my Lord—" beginning to write,—"I will."

Half a minute afterwards Bessy handed him back the paper, with some lines written on it. Her eyes fixed on his face as he began to read them, and still her manner was firm and self-asserted. But her dash of courage failed her, and she had nearly cried out again, when she saw his brows suddenly bend, his sallow cheek redden, and, finally, a hard and scoffing smile curl his mouth, as he tore the paper in atoms, and said,—"False! false, young mistress! or if not false, under your hand, or in your thought, —Look you, Bessy Mutford,"—he rose and closely approached her—"I can prove it false, and I *will!*—Not even by this clever turn shall

you or yours destroy me." Turning to the overseer, he added, "She equivocates after all, and will not make the necessary declaration—but with that you need have nothing farther to do—the officers and magistrates of her own parish are the fit persons to enforce her answer—so, send her to them. As for the other girl—" confronting Lucy Peat, and frowning—"let her, as I have said—but no," recollecting himself—"summon the preacher before me—that 's all—she has suffered enough already."

"I thought so," smiled Lucy, as Lord Lintern motioned the overseer to leave the audience-room, and Lucy to remain.

The overseer was again taking charge of Bessy, outside Lord Lintern's house, and in the act of assisting her into Mas'r Fox's fly, when poor Mutford suddenly appeared from some place where he had been hiding, and, with a manner, a voice, and a look of imbecility—the wreck of excessive anguish and passion—besought the man, humbly besought him, not to execute parish law upon his sister, in his own person—nor with the aid of the constables;—not to put her into the parish cart, and force her off from her father's; but—(and Mutford clasped

his hands and almost knelt, although a certain bitter sneer was hidden under his show of abject entreaty,)—to allow her to be removed by her own family; and he promised faithfully and earnestly that they would do every thing right and needful—every thing to save the parish from being burdened; and, if his request were granted, his gratitude to the overseer should know no bounds, and he would acknowledge himself that individual's debtor for ever.

White looked greatly embarrassed at this unexpected address, as well as at the strange tone of it, and the startling energy of the speaker. It would be difficult to say how he exactly felt; however, he permitted Mutford to return alone with Bessy to their lodgings, upon the strength of the assurances given him that every thing "right and needful" would certainly be done with "the young woman."

During their ride home not a word was spoken between the brother and sister. "If she address me," resolved Mutford, "I will command her to be silent; what have I to do with the sickening—maddening details which now make all the confidence—the forced confidence—she can impart to me?"

But Bessy gave him no opportunity to reject any communication of her's.

When they gained their lodgings, they found their father dead. At first it struck upon the heart of Mutford that the last visit of the overseer had killed him; that, in fact, the man had torn Bessy from her father's very presence, proclaiming her shame. In this, at least, however, he wronged White, and visited his poor sister with a too terrible accountability. Perhaps the fact of his being a father himself—and, recently, an afflicted one—moderated the overseer's petty rage against Michael Mutford, on this single occasion. At all events, the man of authority, as Mutford learned from his landlady, had obtained private speech of Bessy, and induced her to leave the house, at first on false pretences, without even the knowledge of her unhappy parent. And the woman added, that "the poor dear old gentleman was suddenly taken very ill, a few moments afterwards, and died without a struggle, or, it would seem, without a pain."

Mutford ran to his journal, and wrote in it the few disjointed sentences already transcribed. When he had finished them he sat some time in

his chair, then suddenly left the house, and repaired to Lieutenant Graves's tower. His young friend reported that he made no allusion even to his father's death, nor presented the least outward symptom of distress of mind. On the contrary, his manner was gay, and his conversation turned on a score of playful topics; and, finally, he made a request for the loan of a considerable sum of money, which, he said, he wanted to meet certain secret claims upon him; such as modern sons do not generally explain to their serious parents. Lieutenant Graves readily obliged his friend; and Mutford directly left him, running down the sloping ground from the cliff, where they parted, towards the village, and laughing and talking while he remained in view.

It appears that, ere he again joined his sister, Mutford called upon the person of the village best able to superintend a funeral, and gave orders for one, for his father.

Bessy saw him about an hour afterwards. He came before her, as she still sat in the chamber of the dead, now silent but not composed. He looked a moment at the corpse, turned to her, took her hand, led her to it, and said, "Your farewell, Bessy."

She burst into fresh lamentations, asking him what he meant.

"Why, you know, surely," he replied,—"you, at least, (you heard my pledge to the overseer,)—*you must leave the parish directly.*"

"Michael, Michael!"

"Not a word, dear Bessy. Not a word. It must be done. That's all. I will see you safe in another parish. Safely disposed of; nay, comfortably, comfortably, Bessy. Do not reply. Do not speak to me at all, for the present at least, or, indeed, for some time to come. Dispatch, Bessy. Take your last leave of him. You keep me waiting."

Bessy once more cast herself on the dead body, and once more her cries were appalling.

"Come, now," resumed Mutford. She suffered him to lead her to the door of her own chamber.

"Put on your things, for a walk," he added; "and do not be long. I will step back for you in a few minutes."

He returned to the sitting-room; filled the previously empty grate with the pages of his half-written novel, and while they were burning, wrapped a cover round his unmutilated

journal, sealed it carefully, and left it on a table directed to Richard Graves—per stage.

His landlady entered the apartment at a summons from him. He paid his debts to her; also put into her hands money for the discharge of all the other debts due of him and his deceased father, in the village; requested her to forward the journal, a week after that day; and finally wished her a good morning—stating that he would return soon, to see his father buried, according to the arrangement he had made for the purpose.

He trod back softly to Bessy's door. It was ajar. He saw her on her knees, and heard her say, as if concluding a spontaneous prayer—"but they have all abandoned me—and does Heaven give me up, too!"

"Yes!"—thundered her brother's voice, at her back;—"you and me, together!—Come Bessy."—She took his arm. They left the house. He conducted her through and past the village, and struck into green lanes and path-ways, which, after more than two hours' walking, brought them upon a high road leading to towns and villages cut off from much intercourse with the little retired place they had

left. Bessy often faltered during their hurried progress; and he always stopped to let her rest, —never uttering a word to her; but, once, she thought she detected him glancing askance *at her figure.*

It was an unfavourable winter's day; and when he and she stopped at a little public house on the high road,—Mutford asking when the next stage would pass by for ——, the people were scarcely civil to their soiled, as well as humble attire, and agitated manner and appearance.

The stage passed soon. Both mounted to seats behind. It drove on; and for the rest of that day, Bessy travelled she knew not whither. Towards night, her brother handed her down in a small town, conducted her to an humble inn, ordered refreshments, and left her alone, with a promise to see her soon again.

In about half an hour he returned, and sat down with her to a meal of which neither partook much.

"You do not sleep, here, to-night, Bessy," he said, after the attendant had removed it; "I have provided more comfortable lodgings

for you, whither we will directly repair, if you please; their proprietress is an elderly widow, of kind and agreeable manners, and of respectable character, for I have made myself sure. And I have paid her three months' rent, in advance, for you; and given her more money to meet your expenses during that time—on a moderate scale, indeed, as you will perceive—but, as I promised, still you may find yourself comfortable. So, put on your bonnet, and let us leave this house, at once—your luggage won't give much trouble, I fancy?"

He laughed slightly, as he made this remark; and with an ominous shudder, and a new pang and horror added to her other griefs, Bessy quitted the inn, leaning on his arm. She drew conclusions of what was to happen from his words.

He soon introduced her to her future protectress, and installed her in her lodgings. They sat alone for a minute: but only for a minute. He started up and said, thrusting out his hand, as if he had suddenly and forcibly overcome a disinclination to do so——"Now, Bessy, good b'ye."

"And you leave me in this strange place,

without a friend, Michael! — without our father!"

"How can I be a friend to you, Bessy, my dear? now, at least, how can I—that is, so far as living together makes people friends?—when we lived together, before, you know———But we waste words, and what is worse, time. Good b'ye,—I *cannot*, even if I would, stay here with you, in common prudence. We must both live; and money is not to be earned by me in this little town. I must go where *my genius*"—he scoffed—"can be brought to a good market. Meantime, do not fear I shall keep money from you—when I get it. Before your present stock is exhausted, you shall hear from me, if you do not see me. Perhaps you *may* see me, at the end of three months, but I do not promise certainly: indeed, I cannot quite depend on myself, this moment. Yet I should like to see you after the expiration of about that time. We might possibly be able to *talk* to one another, then. At present, I repeat, Bessy—not a word, only good b'ye."

Bessy had often vainly interrupted him, with tears, beseechings, and remonstrances. As he now a second time extended his hand, she cast

herself upon his neck, sobbing forth—"Stay with me, Michael! 'twill be for the best!—stay till I can have answers to the last letters I shall write, for justice, from this place!"

"For justice?—wait on you, till then? and for that!—Let me go, Bessy! Leave me free!"

"Brother! Michael; dear, dear brother!"—she clung to him, in desperation; "*be* a father to me, too!"

"Good b'ye, Bessy—and *I* call *you* sister—ay, and, after all—dear, dear sister—but, good b'ye—God bless you!" He hurried out of the house.

Early the next morning, (and he must not have stopped a moment, after leaving his sister in the town in which he had established her, nor paused a moment during the night, on the road between the two places)—Mutford visited the undertaker in the sea-side village, and after night-fall, the same day, attended the interment of his father. To his satisfaction, as he afterwards said, his friend Lieutenant Graves did not yet seem aware of his recent misfortunes, for he appeared not at the funeral, nor had he called at the poor lodgings lately occupied by the Mutfords.

The evening of the next day, Richard Graves

was surprised by a visit from his old companion in his Temple chambers. And this gentleman also avers that no signs of affliction struck him in Mutford's manner, or discourse, upon this occasion. Nay, he thought that his moody, though well-esteemed friend was fast conquering his former morbidness of mind: and a strong proof of this welcome fact seemed evinced when Mutford, in a sprightly, off-handed way, asked *him*, too, for a pecuniary loan. He was about to *run over to the* Continent, he said, for a week's recreation, and he did not like to draw on his father. It need not be added that he made no declaration of his father's death, much less of his sister's present situation.

Graves had not the sum required at hand; nor could he send to see about it, as he waited for an evening coach to take him down to the country upon a case in which he had been specially engaged. But he wrote a hasty line which would ensure the money to Mutford, by noon, at least, next day; and although he could not stay at home to make his friend welcome, the chambers and little Joey were again at his command. A few moments afterwards, Richard Graves hurried to meet the night-coach.

"I have kept my magnanimous resolves of

never again borrowing money, have I not?" bitterly laughed Mutford to himself, as he lay down,—not to sleep—that night:—"but, though I robbed them openly, instead of under the fair face of friendship, money I *must* have for one or two little occasions: and I *will* repay them, by heavens!—there *is* a way left, after all: ay, and an honest way."

Next morning, before he arose, an event happened which, with its consequences, grievously unnerved, however, the unnatural courage and energy into which Mutford had strung himself. The following letter to Graves, in the country, will explain what is meant, at the same time that it supplies another instance of his successful affectation of good spirits under fearful depression, and, altogether, helps to unfold his character.

MY DEAR DICK,

I HAVE just hopped out of a cage, temporarily supplied to me by the Jew broker for the old debt you know of, and how I do thank him! what a pleasing glimpse of men and things, which otherwise I might have gone to my grave without seeing, has he given me!—I make nothing of the gentleman in full dress, who so

politely wished me a good morning, at my bedside, saying that he had just looked in about that little account of Mr. Abraham Levi. But after threading, at his side, and exactly wherever he liked, a labyrinth of dirty streets which I had never before dreamt of, see me halted before an open door ornamented with a great brass plate bearing the inscription of "Mr. Thomas Hunks, sheriff's officer."

A moment, my conductor dallied at the door with a colleague just come up: and from the few words that passed between them,—slang as it was,—I inferred the projected fate of a future fellow-sufferer. We entered the house; passed a half door, spiked, at about the middle of the passage, and a domestic familiar took me in charge, and, after a glance at my attire, was ushering me into a kind of tap-room, or coffee-room, on the ground floor; but my protector, who had seen the decency of your chambers, Graves, and unwisely invested me therewith, countermanded this proceeding, and, in hopes that I might be of some advantage to the establishment, peremptorily summoned a female waiter, and desired her to "show that gentleman up stairs."

The apartment into which I was accordingly

shewn, told, on the face of it, of a most daring attempt at an elegant drawing room. It was thirty feet, by twenty—I paced it each way—with large folding doors into an inner drawing room, as it were; its furniture consisted of a Brussels carpet, protected, except at the edges, by a cover of grey linen, and those edges showed a very gay and flaunting pattern; an ample sofa; six cane-bottomed small chairs, and two arm ones, all painted like rosewood, and (reason good) of a substantial, resisting construction, but yet drawing-room chairs; two chiffonniers, also mock-rosewood, with elegant white marble slabs at top, and flaming pink silk at front; a bronzed and gilt chimney glass; two *card* tables—(the only tables in the room)—one of them opened, and sustaining a China ink stand, of magnificent size, richly gilt, and most redly flowered, and also a wafer-cup and sealing candlestick, of the same material and fashion; and, to conclude, superabundant chintz-pattern window-curtains, carefully shrouded in coarse white cotton.

As I entered, the grey covering of the Brussels carpet appeared crumpled, near the fully-developed card table, and stained with shoe-dust, and other marks, and strewed with bits

of paper, torn very small, pen-parings, and scraps of straw. The table also was similarly littered; and to it were drawn the two fine arm-chairs, as they had been left by the last tenant (and his friend) of this mournful and vainly-gilded drawing-room.

A first and innocent glance at the windows, through the rich curtain-folds, gave me none of the substantial symptoms of—(disguise it as thou wilt, O Mr. Thomas Hunks, sheriff's officer!) a prison: but a closer inspection undeceived me, and at the same time raised to the highest, my good opinion of the delicate ingenuity that thus strove, no matter how futilely, to beguile out of a notion of his loss of freedom whatever long-pursed wight might be able and willing to pay for his share in the gentle delusion. Truly, no monstrous and ungainly iron bars appeared, crossing each other at rigid right angles, but, rather, a sufficient number of slight ones, tastefully rounded, and almost imperceptibly mixed up with the Venetian blinds, or substituted for the side-slips of the windows, or, haply, the divisions of the panes, themselves.

I sat down, and looked about me, much and irresistibly amused. The sofa, the chairs, the

chiffonniers, and particularly the chimney-glass, had an out-of-place and forlorn air; they looked as if they had been arrested for a bad debt, and knew it. Notwithstanding the strong make of the chairs, they had not only lost many of their brass ornaments, but were shaken in their joints. The crank of one of the bell-pulls was broken, and would not ring the bell, at that side; and the embossed brass pendant of the other had been violently jerked off. I imagined the state of mind in which some of the last inmates of my drawing-room had started up from the table, to appeal to them. Nay, the very fine chimney-glass was cracked; and who did that? and under what kind of excitement had the imprisoned debtor thus foolishly added a new and heavy item to the account against him? But my sketch is done, and I close my letter, although when I took up the pen, I believe it was my intention, or my impulse, to have written a longer one, upon something or other. As to my sojourn in the sponging-house, give yourself no uneasiness about that. It was of very short duration. With the help of a friend, I bade it adieu, in less than two hours after I entered it. And I write this upon the eve of a

journey, I hope; so, you need not wonder if I do not call back to your chambers to ask after the success of your special case. I am glad, however, that we met last night, very glad. Good b'ye, dear Graves—always dear, dear Graves,

MICHAEL MUTFORD.

When you see your brother, fail not to remember me to him.

The evening of the morning upon which Richard Graves received this letter, in the country, he returned to town, his mind not at ease on account of his friend. He could not, indeed, define to himself why he feared and doubted, or what; and yet he did.

His uneasiness was not allayed by a discovery he made, upon entering his chambers. A letter lay on his table, directed to Michael Mutford, Esq., in the handwriting of the persons to whom he had written instructions to enclose to Mutford the money spoken of, the evening before the last. Graves took up the letter, and assured himself that it contained bank-notes. He started.

When he had read in Mutford's pleasant epistle, giving an account of the sheriff's officer's drawing-room, that "with the help of a friend," he had quickly recovered his freedom, Graves concluded himself to be meant. Here, however, was demonstration to the contrary. Some other person (if any) must have advanced to Mutford the means of escaping from durance: "and alas!" was Graves's reflection, "I do not think there *is* another individual in this town, enough the friend of poor Michael to offer him even so trifling an assistance: certainly not one from whom he would accept a pecuniary favour."

Was Mutford, then, still in the law's safe keeping? or, what was this *journey* of which he spoke? Graves recollected his expressed intention of taking "a trip to the Continent:" and the thought chased away another startling one. But again came the question of funds, for, again, supposing the journey, funds would be doubly necessary. Graves grew more troubled.

His chamber attendant, "little Joey," came in from an outer room, with another letter in his hand, and the boy earnestly apologized for

having forgotten to deliver it to his master till that moment: for it had arrived by the morning's post, from the country.—Graves, looking at the superscription, knew his brother Alexander's hand. He opened it, began reading it, and was trembling in his chair before he had done. It communicated, in hasty and general terms, and imperfectly, as the writer had just learned them, the misfortunes lately suffered by the Mutfords; the death of the father; the exposure of the sister; and the flight of the son with her, no one knew in what direction; and it concluded with an anxious appeal to Richard Graves, to try and discover the retreat of his friend, in London; as, according to the information of the coachman of the stage from the sea-houses, thither Mutford had gone, alone, at his last departure.

The moment after he had perused this letter, Graves left his chamber, and proceeded in a coach to the house of Mr. Thomas Hunks, sheriff's officer. One question and one answer decided the truth of Mutford's assertion of having regained his liberty. He had insisted on being conveyed to prison, Mr. Hunks said, about an hour after his arrival in his establishment, and

accordingly was "walked" to the Fleet, without even discharging the score incurred during his stay in the house.

"In the first place, what score was that?" Graves demanded.

"Why, the gentleman had got the treatment of a gentleman; was put into the drawing-room, no less; and though he declined breakfasting, or having a fire ——"

"And stayed with you but an hour—I know —here is my card—and there are five pounds—pay yourself 'the score,' and send the balance to my chambers, in the morning—you see it is not an address worth trying tricks on, Sir—and now your receipt for *your* claim on my friend—and make haste, Mr. Hunks."

And Mr. Hunks, after perusing Graves's card, did make haste.

Soon after, Graves was listening, with horror, scarce kept from breaking out into exclamations, to an account of Michael Mutford's present condition, conduct and actions, within the walls of the Fleet Prison. The narrator was an official of the wretched bastile.

Ever since he had entered, the man said, the gentleman had gone without food, and, it was

feared, intended to refuse it to the last; and he never rose from his straw mattress, in one of the worst rooms of the house—for he could not pay for good accommodation—morning or night; and, very probably, he ought now to be under the doctor's hands, in the hospital; for, though he made no complaint, in words, his moans, when he thought no one heard him, were severe; and he writhed about, like one suffering acute pain all over his body.

A short time only elapsed, after this account of the not unfeeling prison-servant, until the authorities of the Fleet ceased to possess any power of control over the person of Michael Mutford. While Graves transacted his business with them, a medical gentleman, at his instance, visited Mutford in his wretched chamber; and the young barrister was free to receive his report, when he came back to make it. Mr. Mutford suffered, he said, under a severe attack of nervous and rheumatic pains, partly produced by cold, partly, he surmised, by mental excitement; and they were accompanied by a degree of fever; and, altogether, the patient required immediate and careful attention.

Could he be removed, at once?—Yes; but it

must be with competent assistance, for, certainly, he was not able to put a limb under him at present. Graves required no more instructions. He was grasping Mutford's hands a few seconds afterwards, and, without a single allusion to the past, entreating him to come home to his chambers, and Joey.

Mutford did not for some time return his greetings, nor reply to his words; he only stared with a wretched expression at his friend. Presently, however, Graves felt him answer the pressure of his hand, and heard him mutter hoarsely—"I thank you, Graves; *I must*, as usual:" and then he made a vain effort to rise —vain, indeed, for he fell back on his mattress with a stifled shriek. As he offered, however, no resistance to the prompt efforts to remove him, Graves was soon supporting him, an arm round his body, in a coach, well wrapped up; and zealous friendship, and habits of judicious exertion combined to make poor Mutford as comfortable as possible, in Graves's Temple chambers. A hot bath, a slight refreshment, a drop of wine, and an anodyne, set him asleep for the night; and in the morning, he arose without fever, though not yet free from pain,

nor able to use his limbs. Still, Graves refrained from any allusion to the past. It was evident, however, that Mutford looked consciously at him whenever he entered his bedroom, and watched his eyes, as if for a silent admission of facts. Towards evening the patient was much better, and, without declaring his intention to his host, crept out of bed, dressed, and surprised him—holding by the door and walls as he approached—with a visit in his study. Graves sprang up, joyfully took his arm, placed him in a chair at the fire, and sat opposite to him. Mutford smiled weakly, in answer to his good spirits, and they had tea together, and seemed growing cheerful in reality. Now came a question.

"Mutford," said Graves, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "tell me one thing, like a man—did you treat me nobly or kindly in that last letter of yours?"

"No, indeed, Graves; very shabbily."

"Well, then—: so much said, we pass it by for ever and a day."

"Thank you, Graves."

"Tut! Have you given up your projected trip to the Continent?"

A change of deep and bitter feelings rushed for a moment over Mutford's face. It as quickly subsided, however, or he adroitly mastered it; and then he answered, good-humouredly, to all appearance, "I believe I must give it up, for this rheumatic attack leaves me little power of locomotion."

"But the Continent is the very best place to shake off the attack?" queried Graves.

"Or for future exertion of any kind, I fear," added Mutford, in a tone so suddenly filled with despondency that it startled his friend.

"Pho, nonsense! for a man of three-and-twenty."

"Three and twenty—*in years*, dear Graves."

"Now go on with your Byron, and all that—a quotation from Manfred; which, by the way, is a quotation itself."

"Indeed I will not. But, in plain earnest, I do feel that a cripple—a poor one, I mean—must look to give up a good many little projects—of pleasure, of ambition, of endeavour—of any thing, according to his inward nature and outside relations—(suppose even self-justification—or just vengeance)—which may have been formed before he became a cripple."

"My dear Michael, you are buckling on your back, for life, a knapsack that, at your age, is generally carried for a few days, and then tossed off, and kicked away for ever."

"The rascal pains, and those stiffening and contracting muscles, have, indeed, sadly changed me, Graves," resumed Mutford:—he spoke in a heartless voice, and his eyes glistened with moisture.

"Well, well; I will positively not speak another word on the subject with you, till you shall have had a few more good nights' sleep, Mutford."

"Then don't forget the opium," said Mutford. "But it is time I asked *you* a question, Graves. Do you know any thing more of me, of late, than what *I* know you know?" He spoke, resting his hands on his knees, and fixing his eyes on the fire, as his head drooped to his breast.

"I do," answered Graves, also without looking up. There was a long pause.

"How much more?"—continued Mutford.

"The whole, my dear fellow."

They went on conversing, and Mutford gave Graves a good deal of his confidence: seemingly

all, yet not all; and Graves could not doubt the truth of one of his answers to continued questions; yet, once or twice, Mutford deliberately and systematically said what was not true.

For instance; he pretended that his sister Bessy had not left the village on the coast, at all, but was still living there, in secret, under the protection of an attentive though humble woman. And the renewed mention of her name and situation affected him greatly, his friend observed, though he erred in thinking *how:* and Mutford seemed all at once to be filled with much anxiety to return to her, and henceforth protect her, himself, as well as he could.

But nothing was farther from his mind than the last attributed intention. Under his present feelings, he never again wished to see her face. And when he left Graves for the night, he never again wished to see *his* face.

Next morning, however, professing to be almost completely rid of pain, and, with the aid of a stick, quite able to get about, Mutford saluted his friend blithely, agreed to laugh at his gloomy speeches of the night before, and sat down to breakfast in apparently brilliant spirits.

"He has been watching me, I fear," was Mutford's thought before he left his chamber— "and I must and will baffle him."

The day wore on. He grew better and better, or avowed he did; and about six o'clock in the evening suddenly expressed a resolve to run down to his sister, that very night, in the mail. Graves raised up his hands, and eyes, and voice against the proposal. He should, at least, positively stay till morning; travelling at night would give him his pains again.

"Ten to one with you, for any amount, it cures them for ever? — Come, come, dear Graves; the thing must happen."

His friend was obliged to yield. They set out together, to take a place in the mail; and Graves saw it and Mutford fairly started out of London, on their way to the coast.

The young barrister returned to his chambers, and with much difficulty strove to bend his mind to business which was awaiting his attention. Hours of the night wore away. He had sent out little Joey on a message, down to the west end. The boy came back at a very late hour, eleven o'clock, in fact; and after discharging himself of his commission, request-

ed to know if Mr. Mutford had not left town, at eight o'clock, in a mail-coach? Graves, greatly astonished at the question, said he had.

"Then he has returned to town again, Sir," resumed Joey:—"I saw him, while out on your errand, coming out of a pawnbroker's shop in Wardour-street, and followed him afterwards, till he went into the Golden Lion hotel and coffee-house, in Piccadilly."

"What, Joey! are you quite, quite sure?"

Joey insisted that he could not be mistaken. "Call a coach, then, directly, and put on your hat—for you must come with me."

It was to make the boy point out the pawnbroker's shop in Wardour-street that Graves took him with him. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour,—nearly midnight, he prevailed on the proprietor, to admit him, and answer a few questions. He described Mutford's remarkable face and person, and the man was certain, or nearly so, that Mutford had, indeed, been in his shop, at about half-past ten, that evening, and made a purchase.

"What articles?" asked Graves.

"Pistols."—

The proprietress of the Golden Lion, and

her Boots, had not yet retired to rest, when Graves knocked at their door. To his rapid inquiries they answered, in something like his own alarm, that, doubtless, the friend he sought was in the house;—and the lady added—on no good intent, she feared.

"But no noise from his room yet?" demanded Graves.

"None—but the chambermaid gave strange accounts of his conduct, since she had lighted him to his chamber;—and, after sitting a moment, in the coffee-room, before he went up stairs, a little gunpowder, and one small—very small bullet—had been found under the seat he had occupied."

"His room! his room! this moment!" cried Graves—"has he locked himself in?"

Boots, who took a candle to comply with Graves's demand, said that the chambermaid could give the best information. Graves sprang up the stairs of the hotel. Arrived in a long corridor, his attendant pointed out the door of the chamber, before they reached it. Graves paused a moment. It was ajar; light streamed from it; it opened; and a young woman, interesting, for her situation in life, and gentle and

even graceful, though not handsome, came from it with a candle in her hand. She was weeping, and as she turned the bolt, to shut the door after her, she said, "Good night, again, Sir—"

Graves stepped forward rapidly, though on tiptoe; he was about to open the door, when the tenant of the chamber was heard bounding from his bed, and locking and bolting himself in. This sudden circumstance nearly made Graves cry out to Mutford aloud, and attempt to burst open the door; but an instant's thought, producing a rush of curdling fear, checked his voice and his hands.—"At my first recognized cry, the savage will start up in him, and he will mar our meeting with one touch of his finger!"

He turned softly from the door;—beckoned Boots aside, and whispered him to walk close by the chamber as often as would seem consistent with the absence of intention; nay, to whistle, and to sing. The lad obeyed these instructions. Graves then tore off the back of a letter, and with a trembling hand pencilled the following lines—"My dear Mutford—I pursued the mail to claim the assistance of your friendship in the greatest and the most unexpected misfortune that has ever yet befallen

me. They told me you quitted it, a short way out of town, too ill to go on—an old acquaintance saw you turn in here—I implore you, if your health at all permits, to give over sleep for this night, get up, and ride home to counsel, and — if possible — keep me from destroying myself.

"R. G——"

"You, my dear, you," said Graves, turning to the chambermaid, who held the candle for him to write—"'tis you shall hand him this; and ask him to open his door, with your soft voice and kind words—I see he has made you weep, already"——

"Twas because he wept himself, Sir, sitting up in bed, after he had been alone two hours, when I went in to answer a sudden pull at his bell;"—whispered the girl; "and he told me he wanted to say something particular to me, before he should fall asleep; and desired me to sit on the chair by the bed; and took my hand, Sir; but, after that, he said never a word; only cried, cried, Sir, like a woman,—though not in the least loud; till at last he seemed to forget I was there; and I took my hand from him, without his noticing, and fetched away

the candle, as you saw, when you came up stairs."

"Ay, he clung to the touch of the last earthly creature who was unexpectedly kind to him!" thought Graves—"but come, my dear—this slip of paper—request him to open his door—and may God bless your endeavour!"

"What do you mean, Sir?" asked the girl, frightened.

"Do not stop to ask me—do not, my dear—and you will tap gently, and—and speak before you tap—that will be best—and do not tell him you have a note or a message from any one till he lets you in—So—now—speak, speak—"

And Graves shut his eyes, and pressed his hands on his ears, in a horrid fear of the impulse that might give action to the finger which, he believed, Mutford had that instant on a trigger. But the self-doomed *did* answer the musical and soothing tones of the now not assured girl at his door; and shortly, the door opened, and she went in.

"Where is the writer of this?" Graves now heard him demand—"who brought it?"

"I don't know, Sir," answered the girl, "*who* wrote it, but the gentleman who gave it to me——"

"Gentleman!"—Mutford's voice rose high, though it shook fearfully—"and he is in the house?"

"He is, Sir—but, till you gave us permission—"

"Send him up, this moment! Why has he *not* come up, at once!—quick, quick!"

When Graves entered the chamber, in a state of grief and agitation well suited to his purpose, though it was very far from being feigned, he found Mutford nearly dressed in a chair at the bed-side.

"Oh, dear Mutford, now indeed I ask a service of your friendship!" said Graves, after their first greetings had passed—"Oh, my dear fellow, such an unexpected misery—if not ruin! —But I am not at liberty to speak on it, even with you, till you pledge yourself to the deepest secrecy—so your hand—and promise—" Mutford placed his hand in his friend's—Graves instantly grasped it tight, with all his strength —(and he was stronger than Mutford, in Mutford's best day)—swung him from the chair, far from the bed, till he staggered against the wall near the door—and there Graves secured both his arms, and continued—"And now, man! —now, coward and wretched man! man, that

call yourself a Christian man—yet that dared plot this!—man, that has a friend—a true and loving friend—and yet could plan to leave him, for his life, the memory of this!"

"What—what—what?" stammered poor Mutford—the high and not unsublime temper and language of his old friend stunning him, after his recent despair—his dark, dark strugglings and enfeebling resolves—"what mean you, Richard?"

"What mean I?—answer me, I say! what have you hidden this moment, in your bed?—Oh, my dear, dear Mutford!"—he suddenly changed his tone, and clasped his friend to his breast, "forgive me,—forgive me, this language—but it is not meant to you—it seems to me that I have addressed it to some one who was about to do you a grievous injury, in my presence—forgive it, forget it—and tell me you will be my friend still!"

The almost congealed heart in Mutford's bosom re-melted at these last words, and his own bleared, blood-shot, and wild eyes shed tears. The magnitude and purity of his friend's love of him overpowered every other feeling; and, deeply sincere, he knelt, scarcely knowing

it, and, while he thanked Graves, and admitted the badness and foulness of his late thoughts, solemnly called on Heaven to witness that he was sorry for his sin, and would not attempt to repeat it.

And so impressive was his manner, and so convincing his words, that Graves instantly believed him.

"But I can no longer meet you, face to face, Graves," he added—"not for a time, at least. We part, now. You may trust me. You need not watch me. We part.—I go, in truth and reality, to exert myself, as I can, for my sister—the poor little Bessy! I forgot her, indeed—or, worse than forgot her. It has been a blinding, besetting dream. But 'tis past. We part, I say, Graves, this very hour—if not this very moment."

"Where go you, on the faith of a man?" asked Graves.

"To the sea-coast village where your brother is stationed, Graves—thither, on the faith of a man. Good bye!"

The friends parted, indeed, a second time. And though Mutford certainly kept his first promise towards Graves, it soon seemed that he

had again equivocated when he spoke of the place of his final destination. For, in a few days, Alexander Graves wrote another letter inquiring after his former friend; and adding that neither he nor his sister had been heard of since the date of his last, in the sea-side village, or the more inland one, lately Mutford's residence; in fact, in the parish, or the county.

Lieutenant Graves added—what appeared to his brother an extraordinary, if not an alarming fact,—that he had received from Mutford in a letter without a post-mark, the amount of the sum which Mutford had lately borrowed of him.

The following letters were in Mutford's pocket the night upon which his friend visited him in the hotel. He preserved them, and we are therefore able to transcribe them.

TO RICHARD GRAVES, ESQ.

My last letter to you, while you were attending your special case in the country, was, I thought, to have been my very last indeed. It was, therefore, I ended it by saying that I was glad, very glad we had met the night before. For, although, at that meeting, I did not contemplate a long leave-taking of you, dearest Richard, still, at the time of sending you the merry graphic sketch of Mr. Hunks's fine drawing-room, my mind was made up never to see again, either you or the light of our strange world—that is, a more perfect modification of it than was vouchsafed by the cheerful windows of my then place of abode; and so, I called back our interview of the previous night in your happy chambers as a kind of farewell business, and felt pleased it had occurred, as I told you.

The means of passing myself into—rest—were to my hand in that prison—(so much an honour to the people of England who arrest other people of England for debts they cannot discharge, as well as to the humane legislators who permit the unmeasured vengeance, and who render themselves accountable for a fit Bastile for the pauper debtor.) Upon the straw where you found me, Richard, I needed to have lain only a little time, and all would have been well with me. I had no shillings to purchase food or drink; without the money, food or drink were scarce to be expected there; and thus, helped by the merciful pains, and the good fever, I was assured, I thought, of repose in a few days, perhaps in a few hours. And assured of it, too, without raising my own hand against myself; for it was no crime of mine to be racked with aches, and parched with fever; nor would it have been any, if hunger and thirst, with their kind assistants, had given me my *coup-de-grace*. I was only guilty of the irresistible—the—I will call it—involuntary wish —not to live.

You found me out, Richard, and compelled me to forego my soothing prospect. You touch-

ed my heart, a little, too. But even you, and your unexampled love, and cares, and attentions, did not reinspire me with the slightest yearning to go on drawing my wretched breath. As I write this, secretly, in your inside chamber, while you are laudably and honourably exerting your mind, and acquiring fame, and adding to your worldly fortune, in your study without, I declare to you that life would be a bitter, bitter curse to me. Since the change wrought in my very soul, when I found myself a cripple on that miserable bed, I tell you, deliberately and truly, that the notion of living repels me and sickens me, as the notion of dying repels and sickens other men. Death and I have become good friends enough. I was, and I am, of the dead, more than of the living: internally entered, already, into a future existence, and passed and gone out of this. My feeling will seem strange to you, but it is strong and well-defined to myself, and deeply, deeply seated. Writing, here, I can see the sun shining brightly (though in the heart of fetid London) upon the smooth gravelled court before your door, but there are shadow and gloom in that sun to me. I hear the outside hum, and clash, and crash,

of the mixed animal tide—men, women, horses —which pours through a single street of your Babylon—and it is all dull and vague to me. It does not even irritate me, now. Graves, I *cannot* live.

Good Moses, who caused me to be introduced to Mr. Hunks, I thank for my arrival at this conclusion, that is, if, indeed, it was he who deprived me of the last means of self-assertion, in this world—the strength of my body, and the use of my limbs. Character was gone, hope of fortune was gone; I had been outraged—hideously outraged; still, until the pangs of my prison-bed, the animal power, at least, of wreaking justice, only justice, on my last persecutor, was left with me; and, oh! often and often I laughed to myself, in pure pleasure, at the thought. Yes, Graves, helped by the money I had begged of you, it was my determination to speed to France—to track him—to meet him—to confront him—boy, or coward, or whatever he is—and —— But I merely waste paper. Now, 'tis all past by. I ask you again, what can the cripple do?—supposing him before me, I could not strike him to the earth. He would trample on me—a child might do it. I have not even the bodily capability of pursuing him.

To be sure, if I were near him, I might lie in wait, and, without giving him a chance, creep sufficiently close, perhaps, to murder him, deliberately. But, standing as I do—even as I do—I cannot work myself up to that—exactly that.

Then, Graves, farewell! To-night, one of my last earthly thoughts shall be of you.

Till then, I must baffle you, in your calculations of my mood, and probable intentions. To-morrow you will own I *am* able to play the—hypocrite, is it?—This letter, some one must find of course, in my pocket, and it will be forwarded to you. In it, you will discover another, which I pray you to put in the post, that it may reach its destination. You will perceive, by the direction, that I baffle you in yet another matter. But, Graves, I could not give you *her* real address. Not while I lived, I mean. Your heart might have led you to send some gentle female friend—perhaps some lady of your own family—to see her and to soothe her—and the knowledge of that would have cost me unimaginable agony. *My* lost, degraded sister, generously protected, and pitied, and *reclaimed*—by any one *you* knew?—impossible!

However, after to-night, I humbly beseech

you, Graves, to exert yourself, for a little time, in her behalf. Perhaps, as I have conjectured, some good and kind, *and virtuous* woman would see her, at your instance: and then, in a few months, perhaps her little accomplishments might enable her to earn bread for herself; and for another wretched creature: she living alone, I mean—to herself—quite to herself: do not imagine I can for a moment contemplate her introduction into any reputable family.

And now, for the last time, indeed, good b'ye. Do not doubt I love you, my dear, dear Richard. I do. Man never loved man with a better, a purer love. Much less will you suppose that I can forget all the proofs I have received of your love for me.

It is—I feel it is—useless to wish you success and happiness in this world—I will add, in the next: for you are a good and virtuous man, as well as a wise, a prudent, a talented, an industrious, and a fortunate one. Yet, I will not conclude without praying for you all that you merit to meet: increase of fame, of money, of friends—of—in one word, of all I have missed—a smiling, even life, here below, and, at your dying hour, an unclouded prospect of eternity.

Call me, to-morrow morning, in speaking of me, your friend, Michael Mutford: say—"my *still dear* friend"—if you *can* say it from the heart. Perhaps I may be made conscious of your having uttered the words. Good b'ye. Good b'ye!

M. M.

If possible, let *her* believe I have got an appointment in the Indies, and have gone to fill it.

TO MISS BESSY MUTFORD.

When I parted from you last, my dearest Bessy, I thought I might have been able to stay near you, earning money for both our little wants, in England, and seeing you often. Since then, I have engaged myself to travel a long journey, in the hopes of bettering my condition. We shall not meet, therefore, so speedily as I could have wished: but I trust we shall, eventually. Meantime, it is likely that friends of mine will seek you out, and afford you some consolation and assistance, for the present; and afterwards put you in a way, aided by money advanced on my account, to support yourself independently, during your life: independently, at least, if not very elegantly.

Should I not see you again before you are settled in some such way as another person and myself have been thinking of for you, I make

but one earnest request, my dear sister. I entreat you—(and now, do not suppose I intentionally or unnecessarily would wound a single feeling of yours—and forgive me if my words shall not appear carefully or delicately chosen) I entreat you, dearest Bessy, to accept no occupation, no place, that would throw you much into society: indeed, if you can help it, I would recommend you, as a brother, and as a friend, who has never ceased to be anxious, most anxious about you, to live a life of almost strict seclusion. Indeed, will you not have enough occupation, amusement and endearment too, to keep you constantly in your little home?—I can mean but one kind of endearment, Bessy—that of your innocent infant; for I protest to you, Bessy, on the faith and honour of a man, that I have not the slightest, slightest fear or suspicion you intend ever, ever to see my deadly enemy again. I have not the slightest suspicion that your heart is bad, indeed, and therefore I cannot cherish that other hateful suspicion. What has happened, I firmly believe to have resulted, on your part, from unsuspecting innocence, extreme youth, credulity, and over-sensitiveness, together, and not from

premeditation, or habitual want of principle. Hence, I will not carry with me, upon my far, far journey, a doubt of your future conduct. For other reasons, too, I will not. I know you loved our poor father, and is he not now watching you, from Heaven? I know you do love me, and if I shall not be watching you, shall I not be thinking of you, my poor sister? And will you not be thinking of me? of what I have suffered, in common with our father and you—and all at the hands of the family of the paltry coward who has wronged you, and fixed a blot on my name for ever?

Farewell, Bessy. I have said I hoped that we may be doomed to see each other again: I repeat the hope fondly, very fondly. But events are uncertain, dearest sister; and, considering that my proposed journey *is* to be a perilous one, and that my point of destination is very distant, I will — allowing for every chance—make my last adieus to you, in this letter. And adieu, then, Bessy, always dearly beloved, and now most tenderly beloved sister. Oh, do not, do not entertain an idea that my affection for you has ever, ever abated! You know it to have been strong, pure, full—soft, soft, too, although strong—a tearful affection.

You know it to have been such since you were a little lisping child, down, *at least*—that is, as I am afraid *you* think—down, at least to a certain day and moment. This *you* know. And I, Bessy, *I* know, and *I* feel, that down to the very present moment it has never, never changed: that, while I write, with blinded eyes and throbbing heart, it is even greater than it has been. For any word or act of mine, look or gesture, that at any time, under any circumstances, may have made you doubt the state of my heart towards you, I implore your forgiveness: were I by your gentle side I would kneel until you said you believed me, and pardoned me. And after that, I am sure that if ever, on your part, a question of my love towards you slightly chilled yours towards me, you would be able to assure me of a full return of all your old feelings. Nay, I will take for granted now, that my written professions produce the same effect, and that we shall stand, with regard to one another, after your perusal of my letter, the same brother and sister we have been in happier days.

And so, on this understanding, this most happy understanding, again farewell, Bessy, my little gentle sister. God knows how I wish

I could stay near you, to guard you, and to cherish you, till the end of either of our lives! But necessity, dearest, necessity wills it otherwise. To that we must both submit. One last parting word. If you have erred a little, you know, you know the future can amend your fault. And with this feeling in your gentle heart, and a constant recurrence to the religious principles so well fixed in it, since your childhood, I try to hope that your future may not be—assisted by friends, of which make little doubt—very unhappy. Remember, you have nothing to charge yourself with, so far as I am concerned. Remember, too, our good, and kind, and lofty-spirited father, went from us before he knew any thing that could have cost him a pang on your account: that fact I have since ascertained, and I urge it here as my parting word of consolation. Yes, my parting word. For the very, very last time, adieu, adieu, my gentle little sister, Bessy!

M. M.

Should you ever again visit Yorkshire, and be permitted to enter our old garden, look at the rose-bush which I helped to plant on your birthday.

RECURRENCE is now made to Lord Lintern's house, upon the day when Bessy Mutford came for judgement before him.

It will be remembered that he delivered up Bessy to the care of the overseer, and in the same breath ordered him to summon Mr. Boakes into the magisterial presence. Bessy, the overseer, and the grinning and delighted Sam Geeson withdrew. He commanded Lucy Peat to await the overseer's return with her spiritual instructor.

The girl and Lord Lintern remained alone in the justice-room, or library. He sat a few minutes in his chair, his eyes fixed on Lucy. He got up, cautiously fastened the door, resumed his seat, and addressed her.

"How long have you been living in this family?"

"Almost since they came to the sea-side," Lucy said.

"And so, you have had opportunities for observing Miss Mutford's intimacy with the young gentleman you mean?"

Opportunities enough, *she* knew.

"When did you first begin to notice that intimacy?"

"I will swear to between six and seven months, my lord."

Lord Lintern paused to call back to his mind the time of Mutford's first appearance before him, accompanied by Bessy, to complain of the vagaries of the independent Mr. Wiggins. He calculated it to be about six or seven months ago. The (for him) vivacious admiration evinced by his son George towards Bessy Mutford then re-occurred to Lord Lintern. He continued.

"What circumstances of the intimacy have come under your eyes, or to your personal knowledge?"

"Why, my lord," answered Lucy, endeavouring to look a little embarrassed, as she felt she ought to do, "just such as a looker-on can get a knowledge of, without — without being able to swear to any thing particklar—that is, very particklar."

"What do you mean by a looker-on?—a go-between, is it?"

Lucy reddened and frowned, and seemed strongly disposed to vindicate herself against this homely epithet, if she durst. Her habitual self-command, however, enabled her to take no vengeance farther than sitting silent.

"Who employed you oftenest?"

"Employed me!"—she repeated.

"Tut—take that book in your hand."—

Lucy, tamed by the name and the sight of the book into a wholesome recollection of her situation, in the distance of which was a loose sketch of the ever-busy tread-mill, did as she was bid. The magistrate administered to her an oath, by virtue of which she bound herself to answer the whole truth and nothing but the truth, to such questions as he should propose to her.

"And now," he resumed—"did you ever receive money from either party, in this business?"

"A little," Lucy answered.

"From both?"

"No, bless you, my lord,—one of 'em had little of it to spare, *I* know."

"From the young gentleman then?"

The witness agreed.

"Money, how often?"

She could not take upon her, on her oath, to say downright how often.

"Well. What were you asked to do for the money?"

"Sometimes to carry a message, sometimes a letter—and sometimes to say a word, as if from herself, to Miss Bessy."

"I comprehend. You mean you were to praise the engaging qualities of your employer:"—again Lucy winced and bit her lips; so loth are some people, ay, and some of "the best of people," sometimes, — kings, kings' ministers, and kings' female friends, among the number—to call, in their own hearts and minds, their own hearts and characters, by such names as Locke would have been contented with:— "—Well: have you ever seen any of the young gentleman's letters to the — to your young mistress?"

"Never:" although, as she was on her oath, the ingenuous witness admitted, that she had often and often tried to come upon them among Miss Bessy's papers, when Miss Bessy used to be out.

"That was right. But, with regard to the messages, of what nature were they?"

"Sometimes Lucy was the bearer of a request to Miss Bessy to meet the young gentleman, down by the clift; sometimes to admit him into the house, after her father and her brother should be a-bed."

"Did you always get answers to those messages?"

"At first, always; but, lately, after Mr. Michael Mutford spoke to Miss Bessy, the young lady was more close, and would answer nothing, good, bad, or indifferent, but turn away, and leave the room; though, the witness believed, and was sure, she went out to meet her lover, for all that."

"How are you so sure?"

"Why, Miss Bessy often stole out for a walk, alone—a thing she scarce ever before did."

"That is no proof——"

Lucy was coming to the proof of one stolen interview, at least. She watched Miss Bessy one day—the very last, she believed, the young gentleman and Miss Bessy had met, and came upon him and her just as her young mistress was quitting him in a high passion—her voice

loud—her cheeks red, and her eyes as if she had been crying; and the witness had little doubt that Miss Bessy now remembered the day well."

"But, before that day, you had never seen them together?"

"Not that the witness could swear."

"Of what nature were the answers of the mistress of the witness to the young gentleman's messages?"

"Quite kind and good-humoured, only in her own way, roundabout, at first, and modest, as it were; in fact what she, Lucy Peat, called sly."

"Where did you usually meet your employer?"

At this third offence, Lucy answered rapidly and with some dignity, "up and down, here and there, by chance and by appointment; and his lordship might call to mind the evening when his lordship was interposing to put a stop to the doings at the Anchor—that was one of the nights she met him, on horseback, along with his lordship, in the thick of the row, ay, and got a message from him, too, for Miss Bessy Mutford."

"Now attend. Upon any occasion, when

you received a message from the young gentleman, was marriage spoken of?"

"Marriage!" Lucy flouted the idea. "Marriage, indeed, between the honourable George Allan and a poor proud beggar that nobody knew any thing about! Never a single word of the kind was spoken. If there had been, Lucy would have thought it her duty to put his lordship on his guard directly." And, in saying this, Lucy's wisdom led her to believe she was saying what would get her into favour with Lord Lintern.

"I owe you thanks for your honest feelings, so far as they concern me. And they do you credit in the eyes of the world. Certainly, it would have been one thing to have assisted your employer to get married to a poor young lady," (Lord Lintern did not know, himself, what a change was now taking place in his feelings towards Bessy Mutford)—"that, indeed, would have been one thing; while your taking his money—and money, which, as a boy, he had no right to disburse in such a way—to help him to seduce the same young lady, was another thing."

"What, my lord!" began Lucy, vaguely

aware that her eloquence had not served her to the extent she had calculated; the magistrate stopped her with a frown, and continued.

"You say you have been the bearer of a message to this unfortunate young person, praying her to admit the honourable George Allan into the house, after her father and her brother should have retired to bed; you have also said you never saw the parties in question together but once; I am, therefore, to conclude, that you never saw them together in the house?"

This was assented to.

"Could he have been admitted without your knowledge?"

Lucy Peat, doing her powers of observation only common justice,—"believed—was sure not."

"Had Miss Mutford ever consented, in reply to such a message, to admit him, or allow him to be admitted? or were such messages of the kind to which she used to make no answer, but turn from and leave the room?"

The witness, after a pause, agreed with his lordship.

Lord Lintern also paused. His dry and horny face assumed a melancholy expression,

which, however, did not injure it. He sighed, shortly, slightly, and as if with an almost simultaneous effort to check the involuntary action. He spoke again to Lucy Peat, and his tones were softer than usual.

" Give me the name of the street, and of the proprietor of the house in which Miss Bessy Mutford lives."

The astonished Lucy complied. He wrote deliberately at her dictation; and, as some persons passed by the windows at his back, folded up the paper, and arose and unfastened the door, saying to her,—" We have ended *this* subject."

He had scarce regained his chair when Mr. Boakes entered, introduced by the overseer and the beadle.

Lord Lintern regarded the man at first with honest indignation; for, after all, despotism, obstinacy, self-opinion, and, resulting from these, unmeasured severity and harshness, were the chief faults for which his lordship was accountable to man, or in his social character. But, at the second glance, the old magistrate's countenance displayed nothing but great astonishment. He saw a person before him convicted.

upon unquestionable testimony, of almost as much moral turpitude, as low sensuality and hypocrisy united, could engender; and yet he saw that man enter his presence, and stand before his face, unabashed; apparently unanxious; no pallor in his huge high-fed cheeks; no unsteadiness in his round, black, horse-eye; and, in the place of a bullying attitude, only the consummate acting of meekness and unconsciousness of fault. Acting, Lord Lintern construed it; let us hope it was not: let us hope, at the least, that the natural blockheadism of the absurd zealot made him really believe in the truth of some of the self-absolving doctrines he preached.

It is unnecessary to place, in question and answer, the interview which ensued, before the reader. Mr. Boakes was called upon to pay a weekly sum for the support of Lucy Peat's former child; to advance money for her second approaching event; and to enter into security for the sustenance of its result, if that result should prove continuous.

But Mr. Boakes hemmed, and spoke round sentences, inlaid with his own peculiar grammar, and cant, and slang, united, and professed his

utter inability to meet such a demand; his poverty, and his usual waiting upon Providence for the mere necessary comforts of this imperfect life; and—so forth; but when he was seasonably interrupted, and as seasonably urged, he did consent to an arrangement as follows. Forinasmuch as the worthy Mrs. Boakes, understanding the nature of the visit, just made at his house by worthy Mr. Overseer, and worthy Mr. Beadle, had directly removed herself from his roof, with a declaration that she would never abide under it again; and also seeing that, in such a state of lonesomeness, some careful and adroit female hand would be desirable in his establishment, to order and direct things of which his own occupations and thoughts left him no knowledge, and little leisure to attend to; considering these two heads of the discourse, and farther adding, thereunto, the reflection that, in the short-sighted notions of the world, he might be bound to make some satisfaction for a seeming error;—under all these circumstances, he took it upon himself to give Lucy Peat permission to accompany him home merely in the capacity of his housekeeper, or managing servant; guaranteeing to have her

carefully attended in her need; and also promising, either to pay the parish for the burden she had already put upon it, or to remove the child unto his own home, also.

Lord Lintern, after conferring with the Overseer, assented to this settlement of the case for the present: and Lucy Peat and Mr. Boakes left the magisterial chamber, to face a scandalized crowd (none of whom visited Mr. Boakes's chapel) in waiting for them, a little distance from Lord Lintern's abode. Honest women, old and young, composed that crowd; children of both sexes followed its skirts; over whose heads, to one side, peeped Sam Geeson, grinning amain, — to the other, Mas'r Fox, also grinning, after his own fashion, and in his own meaning — he had just exchanged sly greetings with a certain fresh-faced maiden whom he and Michael Mutford once met on the road; and, to conclude, the principal detachment of this army of abomination was headed by the Missis Alice French who had served as a study to Mutford, in the committee-room; who would not be called "dame;" and who so rigorously insisted on the shilling a week "to help pay her rent."

Lord Lintern and the overseer remained some time conferring together: after which, the king of parish vagrants, parish paupers, and parish sinners, repaired to the obscure lodgings of the Mutfords. There he learned that, after giving orders to an undertaker about his father's funeral, Michael Mutford, with his sister, had gone, no one knew whither. He returned to Lord Lintern. He was again despatched to make inquiries. They proved fruitless.

The old magistrate was observed, by all his servants, to pass the remainder of that day, and the ensuing evening, in unusually bad spirits: at least, in ill-humour, or bad-temper, of a novel kind. They also noticed that he despatched a letter to his son George, to the Continent, after having spent a long time writing it.

The next evening, they saw him, with surprise, issue forth alone, studiously muffled up. One of them watched him, and tracked him. Lord Lintern was seen to mingle with the few who followed the corpse of Mutford's father to the grave. And Mutford himself did not know, could not guess, that a message delivered to him, after the interment, to the purport that

a gentleman requested to speak with him, at the other side of the church-yard—and from which message he flew away as if it had announced his destruction—Mutford did not, could not imagine that it was Lord Lintern who had sent it.

The unloved and lonely despot-father walked home, slowly, thoughtfully—and, perhaps for one of the first times in his life, not fully possessed with the conviction that the power which place and money give of moving events and persons, can of itself confer happiness on its possessor. Considering how often, and how arbitrarily he had used that power, this reflection, it is admitted, savoured more of selfishness than of high-mindedness—of regret on his own account, than for others who had suffered, at least equally with him, in consequence of his mistake.—No matter. Taking the nature he bears, in common with us, as it is, in reality, even the discovery now ascribed to him may be said to be a first and not an inconsiderable step towards his becoming a new man. He arrived at his magnificent mansion, not thinking as much of the infallibility of his own opinions, or, indeed, of himself, as hitherto he had been in the habit

of doing. And here may we not pronounce him to be a second step on the road to a change of character.

His parish rector, the good, and the treble-chinned (if that is possible) Doctor Bailey, awaited him in the library. The excellent ecclesiastic sat and talked some time—it is not said in expectation of the not unusual hint to adjourn to the parlour, where a side-board was generally well laid out, in the evenings, with suggestions to supper. But Lord Lintern showed no symptom of stirring out of his magisterial arm-chair, and moreover, seemed to take little interest in the profound gossip of his worthy visitor: and, at length, Doctor Bailey rose to take his leave, and just then recollected that he had a letter in his pocket for Lord Lintern.

"From whom?" — demanded his lordship, admitting some interest.

About two months ago, the Doctor answered, a person who had come, in an ill state of health, to settle in the parish, sent for him, gave him the letter in question, and requested him to take charge of it.

"And why had it been held back two months?"

"At the instance of the writer of it, who wished it to be delivered, according to its direction, only in case of his death."

"And he *is* dead, then?" demanded Lord Lintern.

"He was interred this evening," the Doctor answered; and, having handed the letter to his admired neighbour and friend, bowed, smiled, and took, altogether, a polite and gracious leave.

Lord Lintern opened the letter, and read as follows—

"It is only within the last week that, by mere chance, I have discovered how nearly related to me the Viscount Lintern is. Had I known the fact before, I would not have presumed to end my days within reach of his observation. But that is not the reason why I now write to you. This is the reason.

"By the help of law, lawyers, and money, you have succeeded in withholding from me my right. I will not affirm that you believe the right is on my side. On the contrary, however I may arraign your character and dispositions in other respects; I am sure that if your self-opinion and love of predominance allowed you to judge of facts as they stand, I should have

had my own at your hands. However, your perseverance against me has beggared me and my son, and daughter, and, I am convinced, is killing me at last. When you get this letter, it will have done so. And, as you read it, suppose me addressing you from the grave while I add what follows.

"Although you *are* successful, I am wronged, and I shall die wronged. After my death my children will live wronged. Half of your present possessions has been mine since my birth, and it will be theirs, when I die, during their lives. Mine and theirs, in truth and right, though enjoyed by you and yours; so judge me, God, as my assertion is true or false. I am a Christian, you know, and I ask my future lot to be dealt out to me on that judgement.

"Your witness of the private marriage? He was a perjurer. Your entry in the parish register? It was forged, either by him, or by some one else, in his interests, or in yours. Direct proof of these two facts I cannot give; that is to say, I cannot bring evidence of the witness's mind, nor yet of the act of forgery. But I know, I know that both were what I now call them. I know it as clearly as a man could

know a falsehood told of his own thoughts and actions at any given time and place where he was not; and I repeat, to perjury and forgery I and mine are victims.

"But now, do not for the very last time misconceive me. Again recurring to the make and material of your character, (though you and I have never been good friends together,) I pronounce my conviction that you are no party to the double fraud. I pronounce my conviction that, even after its occurrence, the author or authors of it never communicated it to you. For, if they had, I am equally sure you would not have kept possession, to the ruin of me and my boy and my girl, of the property which it alone—under sanction of the sapient and baffled law—has conferred on you. In haughty indignation, if in no other spirit, you would long since have divested yourself of your borrowed trappings. Even your hate of us—(if, beforehand, it did not vary from what it has been,) your hate of us, your scornful hate, would contemn *such* a triumph. To trample us down at the voice of judge, jury, eloquent and pathetic advocates, an applauding court, newspaper paragraphs, and a sympathizing world,—to do so,

able to assure your own breast that—no matter how literally and rigorously—you had the moral as well as legal right—*that* triumph I can understand to have been, and to be, most dear to you. But the other! No, I will not, I never did believe you capable of it. Your witness, I repeat, your hoary-headed witness, coined a story, for which, imposing it on you as truth, he knew he would receive a great reward; and his hand, or hands procured by him, or other hands, set to work by other heads, chiming in with his speculative villainy, forged—and most cleverly forged, I admit—the entry in the parish register.

"Farewell! While I am rotting in my obscure grave, I ask you only to give this letter a patient perusal. One last word I have to say. My principles and feelings, religious and innate, urge me to say it: I shall die in no hatred of you. This moment I bear you none. Your ill-will towards me, I forgive: I can easily do so, because it has no grounds to rest on; because it never has had. In asserting, according to the prescribed and every-day forms, my own and my children's rights, I have not, from the beginning, done so in hostility to you. You

resented my endeavours in hostility; in personal, bitter, devouring hostility: that was the great mistake, which has indeed placed your foot upon the ashes of

"ROBERT MUTFORD."

Habitual incredulity to any thing that he *would not have* so, and long-indulged, and almost always successful imperiousness, at first enabled Lord Lintern to cast this letter from him, contemptuously, and assure himself it was a lying document. He rose hastily, and paced the room, frowning, and scoffing almost. He sat down again. The letter lay at his feet, open, and the name of "Robert Mutford"—of him who, no longer had a name—re-attracted his eye, and he grew calmer, and more thoughtful. Untaught, unwilled, the character of the man who once bore that name, stood before his mind, and challenged investigation. Lord Lintern could not help feeling, that, during all their contests together, straightforwardness had invariably distinguished the actions of his half-brother. The possibility of his posthumous assertions being true, now stirred in his breast, and he grew more thoughtful. He took up the letter, be-

gan to read it again, and at the words, "suppose me addressing you from the grave," possibility became strong probability, and a slight shock of alarm passed through his mind and heart—nay, he was aware of it, passing through his frame.

He continued his reperusal. He paused intently on the sentences,—"So judge me God, as my assertion is true or false. I am a Christian, you know, and I ask my future lot to be dealt out to me, on that judgement." Arguing, not by his own convictions and feelings, but by what he indeed knew to have been those of the writer, Lord Lintern now almost yielded to certainty: and upon that, a sudden rushing-in of different recollections, all mixed together, produced, in his still badly balanced mind, an explosion of impatience, which for some moments scattered every reasoning power before it.

"If the letter spoke truth, here was Augustus's story of the dying declarations of the witness proved true! and, at least for repeating those declarations, his elder son was not a lunatic!—had not merited to have been treated as such! And yet, his father stood accountable

to the world for having so treated him!—curses confound the man who had pronounced on the boy's state of mind! Eternal curses! Could not the blockhead, or else the knave (he was one or the other) be punished for signing the certificate?"

From the earnestness with which Lord Lintern thus strove to place all the blame on another, it was evident he felt something like remorse, on his own account.

"Again, *if* the letter were true!" the despotic old man stamped, and clenched his teeth and his hands at the conviction which now arose —"he *had* been enjoying the fortune of another! he *had* been drawing place, and power, and luxury from it! and that other, his detested enemy!" he imprecated fearfully in a loud voice, yielding to all his long-cherished hurry of temperament, which, as it had often overmastered others, now overpowered himself.

A third time he snatched at the letter, and went on with it. Its general tone, and some of its remaining sentences, gradually stole new thoughts and feelings over him. First, his pride and vanity were soothed by the downright disbelief of the writer, that *he* could have acted

fraudulently. From a declared enemy, that, at least, was gratifying. Declared enemy? he unconsciously asked himself; and he continued to make out a case against his own proposition. Robert Mutford had never *declared* that he was so. Now, in his letter, written on the crumbling verge of the grave, he declares, on the contrary, that he had never borne hatred: and if any assertion of the letter were true, so must be every other. Lord Lintern leaned his cheek upon his hand, and pondered, till his soul was sad, and bitter, and dark within him. The picture of a man ruined and killed, by his agency, or partly by his agency, professing good-will, and forgiveness towards him, in his dying moments, arose before his thoughts, and tamed him. Presently, as if he had been regarding the picture in a magic mirror, two other figures began faintly to appear; those of the son and the daughter of his dead half-brother: and he shrank, conscience-stricken, from the desperate scowl of Michael Mutford, as he pointed to Bessy, kneeling in the agonies of shame and fear at his feet. And yet another figure finally broke through the shadows behind—that of her youthful destroyer, bending

towards the miserable brother and sister, with a cold, faint leer of derision; of successful, premeditated villainy! and, mixed with his ever-ready impatience, Lord Lintern felt indignant anguish that *his* son, and his favoured son, should have wilfully perpetuated in his succeeding generation the wrongs which *he* himself had but unconsciously heaped upon Robert Mutford.

And—Augustus, again! Augustus, sitting, that moment, in his temporary mad-house, with no society but the village surgeon, and his keepers!—It was all one subject. He, and the Mutfords—and his daughter Ellen, too, now banished for months to live, as she might, under the domestic tyranny of her disappointed maiden aunt, in Wales! She, as well as Augustus, and every one else, had suffered wrongfully, *if—if*——

Lord Lintern drew his desk close to him, and wrote the following letter to his law-agent in London.

SIR,

Particular circumstances have lately led me to think that the entry in the parish register,

which chiefly gained us the last decisive verdict at our trial-at-bar, is a forgery, and I commission you to have it re-investigated with the utmost possible attention, and severity, in the direct view of enabling me to divest myself of the acquisition of property it has conferred upon me, if, indeed, it should turn out to be what I strongly suspect it is. Your answer will be anxiously expected by, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

LINTERN.

Having sealed this note, and committed it to the hands of a servant for transmission to the post, Lord Lintern retired to his bed-chamber, avoiding, contrary to his invariable custom, the temptations of the side-board in the eating-room, and substituting for,—perhaps—a bottle of champaigne, of white hermitage, or even stout sherry, a glass of pure water.

Scarce aware of the act, before lying down to sleep, he drew aside one of the window-curtains, and looked towards the old-fashioned green-house, which had been converted into a legalized prison for his elder son. Light shone through the little iron-barred window of the room,

where, as he knew, Augustus sat, reading, writing, or, silently, or pensively, braving his lot: "though," his father continued thinking, "not furiously, of late, they tell me; nor, indeed, since his re-capture, in town, now upwards of four months ago; and I can observe, myself, that, in his daily walks, out with his keepers, his face, step, manner, and whole expression are altered for the better. And why—supposing my wretched boy not a lunatic, and only influenced by the changes of his horrible malady —why more tranquil and rational now, than he has been in the early stages of coercion?—The village Esculapius speaks of his always poring over good books, commanded, in chief, by a Bible—pho!"—and with his habitual sneer at every thing he *would* not credit, Lord Lintern tried to dispose himself to rest for the night; but a heavy sigh soon followed his sneer; nor was it quite unconnected with the subject of that very sneer.

His sleep was unsound. Many hours of the night he spent awake; and the intervals of comparative rest were filled with dreams of such a character as had never haunted him before: afflicting, touching, softening dreams, made up

of their own wayward re-associations of the events and the thoughts of the whole day. He awoke, a more reflective and less audaciously proud man. And his first waking reflections turned to Augustus and his books; and he did not now sneer, but sighed again.—"A second time supposing him not mad, *can* such studies change the violent and dangerous nature I know he once was a slave to?"—asked Lord Lintern:—"Robert Mutford, too? what can have conferred upon *him* the unaffected power of writing to me, in sincerity, such a letter as he has written?—He also talks of——Tut, tut:"—the old man, who had really never investigated one side or other of the question upon which his thoughts now ran, but, through youth, manhood, and age, had contented himself, at second hand, with theories which best suited the uncurbed indulgence of his temper and dispositions, still disdained to believe that others could be benefited by different theories. And yet, as he descended to breakfast, he internally called it very strange that his mind should suddenly summon up the person of Mr. Snow, with his benevolent and luminous smile, his at least soft and soothing voice, words, and manner,

and his zealous, though not ostentatious doctrine of forgiveness of one another in the names of charity and of love.

Two letters awaited him on his breakfast-table. The first he took and opened was from his eldest daughter. He shook in every limb as he read it. It gave, with moderated expressions of sorrow and mortification, an account of the elopement to the Continent of his second daughter, in company with the husband of the lady under whose roof both his daughters were staying. It commented on the unfeeling and ungrateful step, as one taken in the view of mere self-gratification, without any anxiety for the inconvenience it might throw in the way of the writer, at least for some time, with respect to her own establishment in the world. And a post-script added, that although Lord Lintern had on former occasions objected to the addresses with which a certain younger son had honoured his eldest daughter, it might not now, that is, under the present unexpected circumstances, seem inexpedient to reconsider the subject, particularly as the gentleman continued attentive, and professed himself satisfied with the fortune already at the fair writer's disposal, by virtue of her mo-

ther's will, even though Lord Lintern might still object, and think fit to leave his daughter otherwise unprovided for. In fact, to spare herself the excessive pain of a renewed refusal from her dear and honoured father, Lady Georgina Allan wrote the present letter, upon the eve of the morning when she was to become a wife—with the aid of a special licence.

The second letter was from a gentleman of whom Lord Lintern had heard, though they were personally unacquainted. It bore the Paris post-mark, and ran thus:—

MY LORD,

I AM greatly grieved to be compelled to address you on the subject of this letter, but my prospects in life, if not my existence along with them, are at stake. At play, here, I have lost nearly every shilling I possess in the world, and not lost it fairly. Improper practices have been detected on the part of certain persons against whom I played; the police are in possession of the proofs in my favour. I do not wish to proceed to the extremities of open exposure if possible; I ask only that the gentlemen in question may refund, and all shall be passed

over. Among them, I am pained to mention your younger son, the Honourable George Allan, and I write to you in the hope that your timely remonstrance with him may protect the name of Lord Lintern from any shade that otherwise may be cast upon it. He has left Paris, and, it is thought, is in England by this time. Of course you will have a speedy opportunity of conferring with him. I await the honour of your Lordship's reply, and am, &c.

The effect of both these letters upon such a mind as Lord Lintern's, would, at all times, have been great; in his present situation it was something terrific. Previously humiliated he had been, and had half owned himself to be, in consequence of mistakes committed; and he had made the partial acknowledgment without much difficulty, balanced as it was by vanity flattered, and pride and haughtiness aroused into a determination to correct his false steps. His greatest error, too, had consisted in believing himself hated by persons who did not hate him; who, at the least, would have borne him good-will, and acted fairly and justly by him, had he allowed them the opportunities. The

new cases before him wore a very different aspect. He had mistaken again, but in a way insufferably mortifying to his notions of his own infallible judgment of persons and characters. He had mistaken indifference, eked out by self-interest, for sincere attachment; he believed himself loved where he must have been despised. He had mistaken accomplished suavity and mannered decorum in his two elder daughters, and new-fangled stolidity, if nothing else, in his son George, for good and pure principles, and a fixed sense of honour. And upon these mistakes he had built up, high and imposingly, to his own mind, triumph in his seeming successful direction of their spirits, much of present éclat, reflected from them, towerings of ambition for the future, extension and perpetuation of rank, reputation, name. And where, now, was the all he had so built up? Almost fiendish tears filled the old man's eyes, as, tearing the letters in atoms, he ground them under his heel, and asked them to tell—"where!"—

Unqualified detestation of his family took possession of him. And at first the friends for whom the reader is interested were included in Lord Lintern's anathema. His late slight

change of feeling towards them flitted away, and they re-appeared to his distempered mental regards in all their former provocations to hatred and hostility. No—he would not be duped into trusting in a single human being. Every creature with whom he was connected, directly or indirectly, plotted against him. Robert Mutford's posthumous letter was again false: a mere canting, hypocritical, and well-conned appeal to his credulity: a last effort for revenge; revenge beyond the grave. He would instantly countermand the instructions he had yesterday written to his solicitor. "Ay," he cried aloud, his passion making him momentarily even a worse man than he has yet appeared to us to be—"Ay, were the lie a truth—were that possible—'tis for them to show it—'tis for them to re-investigate, and scrutinize—and pay money for the purpose, *now*—yes—*money, money, for the purpose*—so, let them,—*now!*"

"Now?" asked something in his heart, in spite of him; "and why, now,—that is, to-day—if not yesterday?—it is not they who have stabbed at me since; it is not they—oh, God, if God there be that hears me—it is not they who have made me the most wronged, outraged—and—deserted and lonely man upon the

face of the hateful earth, this morning!"—A tear, but, in a degree, a softening one, found its way as he dashed down his face upon his outspread hands, and his mind ran on in new associations. "Emily, Emily!" his wife's name, who had died giving birth to his youngest daughter, and youngest child; "if you were alive now, would *you* too deceive, despise, and abandon me?—Can you, *can* you attend to my wretched words, Emily?—Emily, my youth's friend, who, till your last breath, I believe and hope—no, no, I fully believe it—never did me wrong, never gave me a moment's pain?—Emily—you, who, if you had but lived, could have saved me, I do think, from my since-acquired dislike of mankind?—you, for whose gentle sake I once was gentle? And oh, perhaps you could have saved others, too, for me,—and me from them!—our miserable children, Emily! perhaps, under your hand, they would not be what they are!—Perhaps it is I who have taught them haughtiness, and coldness, and hardness of heart!—Emily, Emily, *can* you hear me? Do you, in some modification of being, still exist to do so? You often told me, when I only laughed at your preaching, that there *is* an after-life, and that, if you should

pass into it before me, you would, from its bourne, ever keep your mild eyes fixed upon me, here on earth ; and have your words proved true ? and—I ask it again and again—do you now hear my question ?—would *you* also forsake me, if you were still alive, in this detested life ?"

Lord Lintern arose from the table where his face had lain on his hands, walked slowly to a desk, unlocked it, took out a written paper, and read it aloud, but in a weak, and sometimes faltering voice. It was a prayer for her children and for him, which the good wife he had just invoked, had secretly composed and committed to writing, a few hours before her death, and he had found it in her hand, after she had breathed her last mortal breath—the hand extended to him for a long farewell. The prayer was the prayer of a pure-minded, wise, and Christian woman ; and in an affecting strain of simplicity, it besought God to enlighten the mind of her beloved husband, to the end that he might believe, with a full conviction, and so be qualified for bringing up the young children, whom she then left motherless, to his care.

Seriously, most seriously, Lord Lintern read the little document over and over again. If it

produced no belief—(and we cannot expect that it should have done so)—it awakened the next most desirable sentiment—a wish to believe. He arose to replace it where he had found it—in his deceased wife's Bible. He saw her name, written by her own hand, in the title-page. He turned over the leaves in an absent manner, and many of her marks and annotations appeared in the margin of the volume. He held it open, and involuntarily began reading the Sermon on the Mount. He continued, till he had ended it, his mind gradually becoming attentive and absorbed. Repeating to himself —"beautiful,—" more than once, he put up the little manuscript and the book, and sat down, thoughtfully.

His mind became filled with a thousand imperfected resolves, wishes, and speculations. Again, it would be unnatural to suppose him convinced on the great abstract question; and yet, again, he felt an increased yearning to be so. "Delusion or not," he said, "I will try to gain it." But other more vivid subjects agitated him. Robert Mutford's letter, his son Michael, his daughter — little Bessy; — Augustus, his own son—Ellen, his own daughter:

could they—or any of them be brought to care for him, yet?——That is—supposing, a second time, that they, too, had not all wronged him, and planned against his honour, peace, and happiness?

Very soon afterwards he was walking towards the sea-coast village. At the house of the overseer, there, he paused, and demanded of Mr. White if any intelligence of the destination and lot of the young Mutfords had resulted from late inquiries. Receiving an answer in the negative, he continued his way, scarcely intending it, to the parish church. It was Sunday. He looked at his watch, to ascertain if it was church hour, saw that it was, and entered the lonely church-yard.

But it had not been his intention to pass into the church, itself. A vague inclination took hold of him to observe, stealthily, the site of Robert Mutford's grave, in order to determine —should circumstances permit him—or—as he explained it to himself — call upon him — to superintend the erection of a monument over the remains of his half-brother. From a remote spot his eye rested on the yet fresh earthed grave. "And was he not my enemy indeed,

who now rests in that obscure nook?"—This question started a train of serious and saddened reflection, and for some time he stood still where he was.

The organ, accompanied by almost a shout—though a harmonious one—of young, shrill, clear voices, suddenly burst forth in the church. The emaciated old man—the so long emaciated in mind and heart, as well as body—thrilled, as if he were a boy, filled in every vein with fresh and rushing blood. His eye turned to the open door; then, as if he were ashamed or afraid of his half-formed intention, glanced round the church-yard. No one observed him. He walked to the porch, entered it, and, without being seen from within, stood where he could hear whatever was hymned or said.

The organ and the young village choir ceased. There was a pause, only disturbed by the slight noise of persons adjusting themselves in their seats, as if making preparations to be unusually attentive. Presently a man's voice, full, soft, and most impressive, sounded through the hushed assembly. Lord Lintern thought he should know that voice; and yielding to curiosity if to no better impulse, he stepped noiselessly from

the porch into the nearest vacant seat, and looked towards the pulpit. He had conjectured aright. It was Mr. Snow who began to preach; the good Dr. Bailey often yielded to his request to do so, during his occasional visits from town to the sea-side.

Lord Lintern *felt that he felt* glad of this occurrence. He listened without any imperious predetermination to sneer. The sermon was a diffusive illustration of a doctrine hinted at by the preacher during his peace-making visit to the old nobleman's mansion, and which, at the time, his lordship called drivelling, at the least, since the irresistible personal impression of Mr. Snow scarce allowed him to call it hypocritical cant. Upon this occasion, however, he did not even visit it with his former definition. He said to himself, that if it could stand good in the general breast, and to the common nature of man,—*if it were true*, it was magnificent. But he denied its truth. His system of metaphysics denied it: his, and that of Mr. ——, the very last new writer on the portion of man's identity which is not absolutely material. No—beautiful, bewitching as it seemed, it could not be. This he continued say-

ing, at almost every pause the preacher made; until, towards the end of the sermon, he surprised himself with this sudden doubt—"yet, in Mr. ——'s system and mine, there is certainly not a word about *heart*, or about whatever it is to which all mankind, from constant and long experience and observation of themselves, have agreed to give that name: and, in this system there *is*—though indeed, the popular word I have used before, does not find a place in it, either:—let me try and make it out more distinctly: 'tis certainly new."

But Lord Lintern mistook. Mr. Snow's system was by no means new. It was at least as old as that which his Master had proposed, in perfection, and to which Plato, Socrates, and the other apostles of antiquity, before the Coming, had borne splendid though not as consummate testimony. And Mr. Snow and all those who, as he asserted, had taught it to him, proclaimed it older still. Older than—(except ONE who preached it) their discovery of it. Older than man's first birth, or the calling into order, out of chaos, of man's world. Older than all things—before all: and to be, after all: Eternal; The Truth.

Nor was it difficult of comprehension: nor, for mere definition, did Lord Lintern think, on his coming out of church, that day, it required many words. "This," he said to himself, "I conceive it to be. Man's nature, identity, three distinct portions; body, mind, and—a something else, to be called by any technical name we like, but, actually, an impartation of the nature of Him who, it is contended, created man. And that third portion, capable, if permitted to assert itself—if not neglected, to the exclusive cultivation and indulgence of the two other portions,—capable of making man, even in his present state, very happy;—and very good, of course, because very happy.—*An impartation of Him who, it is asserted, created us*—God. God, whose essence is — necessarily, indisputably, if at all He *is*—pure love. An impartation, then, of pure love, responding to God, and to all men; because all men equally possess it, in themselves: and to all nature, all creation, conceived and called forth in the same spirit of true love. Eternal, since—*(if)*—its source be eternal: essentially eternal; and as essentially immortal: that is, outliving mind and body:—*my Emily's future life.*"

Lord Lintern continued deeply absorbed, on his homeward walk. His thoughts assumed a new direction.

"Ay; but look at man, in all countries, in all times: has he given any reasonable proof that his nature is so compounded? so happily? so goodlily?—What pure love has man ever shown for man?—whence come the dagger, the sabre, the roaring cannon, the scourge, the tomahawk, the rack, the sap, the mine, the dungeon, of old, the modern gaol—and the modern debtor's gaol, too; and the modern Bridewell; nay, the wretched parish workhouse?—of man's love for man? of the reciprocity of a spring of pure love of each man for the other, silently welling in every bosom?—No; no; the system, glorious as it is, is but a glorious vision; it has never been proved, and therefore—"

Lord Lintern's logical mind interrupted itself, to ask of itself—"And therefore, *what?*—never *can* be proved?—is that so absolutely certain? capable of demonstration?—A very part of the doctrine inculcates the necessity of attending less to the unbridled workings of the two other portions of man, and more to this third portion, in order to its more ample and

general developement;—and has man yet done so? Supposing him to begin, at last, to do so, and to continue watchfully and fitly, am I, until the result of the experiment appear, entitled to my sweeping conclusion?"

"It *may*, then, be true: that is, true of all men, as regards their nature and capabilities; of some, it is shown—asserted, at least, to be true. Of the ancients, mentioned to-day by the preacher; of their Successor—The author of the Sermon on the Mount; of all his immediate followers; of many since,—Fenelon among the number. Of Mr. Snow himself, I will contend, if true of mortal man:—of my own Emily! yes, if true of human creature!——True, perhaps," he continued, a crowd of other thoughts and feelings now interrupting the steady march of his reasoning—"Of Robert Mutford, perhaps, true;—the key to his letter, and to the feeling that could inspire it—could make it natural—possible:—and my son, Augustus, has been (—if not a madman—which shall soon be proved—) attending, now for months, to the discovery of this truth, in himself?—and Ellen has long been Mr. Snow's pupil;—what will it produce in them?—

Certainly, though strictly treated, Ellen never—I will say so, after all that's passed—never, except in befriending Augustus, behaved to me unlike a kind daughter, in word, act, or look. I will write her word to come home; and her old Planche shall bear her the letter. I will look close at her again. Besides, unless she indeed merit banishment from me, her aunt's roof cannot prove comfortable to her.—Perhaps she may yet be a daughter to me—though an only one.—Though,—if *the forgery has* not *been committed*, I shall have much to forgive her: and I will:—even living on in scepticism of her beautiful doctrine, I may be able to practise some of its precepts. And I will examine it more closely, in all its bearings. That shall be the preparation of my mind, for the result—whatever it is to be—of my last letter to London. I should like to see Mr. Snow again in my house."—And here, Lord Lintern started, as, raising his eyes, he saw Mr. Snow close before him.

He had bent his steps towards the Post-office of the village, intending to take advantage of being near it, to ask personally for his letters, an unusual thing with him. Mr. Snow, on

the same intent, had gained it some moments before, and, with his back to Lord Lintern, was in the act of glancing over a letter that had just been handed to him, and which seemed to interest him very much. Lord Lintern, though wishing to address him, would not do so for the moment that he seemed so much engaged; nor could he advance to demand his own letters at the Post-office window, because Mr. Snow stood close before it, hastily perusing the lines he had that instant received. In this situation, his eye, unwilled by him, rested on the open letter in Mr. Snow's hands: he thought the writing much resembled his daughter Ellen's; he looked at the bottom of the third page for the signature; it was her's. He turned off hastily from Mr. Snow, glad that the Reverend gentleman had not noticed his presence, and now suddenly giving up all thoughts of saluting or entering into conversation with him.

Lord Lintern, in a relapse of his habitual impatience and *hauteur*, was jealous of Mr. Snow's correspondence with his banished daughter, while to him she had never written since her retirement into Wales. True, he had for-

bidden her to do so; but he would not weigh that point;—on the contrary, he made it, by association, tell against her. If he had desired her not to send letters to him, he had laid upon her the same injunctions with regard to every other person; in fact, he had interdicted her from the use of pen, ink and paper, while living under her aunt's roof; and now, his own eyes gave him proof of her undutiful disregard of his wishes and commands. The despot swelled again in the old man's breast. He chafed equally against his daughter and her correspondent; he called him a wheedling and meddling priest; and he imprecated in a lordly manner, to himself, that it was very much to be wondered at, and lamented, that the private affairs, and the private feelings of a family—of father and daughter—could not be kept sacred from such interference.

When he thought that Mr. Snow must have retired from the Post-office, and gone out of sight, Lord Lintern returned to demand his own letters. One was given to him. The direction was in the old-fashiond hand-writing of his maiden sister. He opened it on the spot, and it did not soothe his present mood. It

informed him that, after a sojourn under the writer's roof, of which not a day nor hour was unmarked by obstinacy and a most refractory disposition, Lady Ellen Allan had stealthily eloped, no one knew whither. And thus she had repaid months of the most devoted attention, affection, and watchfulness — in fact a literal observance of the system laid down by her father, Lord Lintern, for her treatment. The writer was convinced that she must have been assisted in her sly elopement, and should not wonder if there was a lover in the case. Lady Ellen could not have arranged, alone, and without money, to disappear so suddenly and so effectually: besides, without the inducement of a lover, what could cause her to dislike the elegant retirement of her aunt's most picturesque residence, and the soothing care which she invariably experienced in it?—Upon other grounds, this conjecture seemed strengthened. As Lord Lintern had been previously informed, the heir of the richest proprietor in the shire did Lady Ellen the honour to solicit her hand: a young gentleman of morals and probity, if not very remarkable for personal or what were called mental accomplishments; but Lady

Ellen persevered in her first unceremonious and scarcely civil rejection of him; (and though he visited them every day, could not be brought to receive him with the necessary courtesy. And again Lord Lintern's sister asked of him — what but a pre-occupation of her feelings by some other suitor, and doubtless some less worthy one, could lead her so pertinaciously to reject the heir of the richest proprietor in the shire, and a gentleman who would certainly be in parliament, and who stood an exceeding good chance of a title?—The writer reiterated her first opinion; nor would it in the least surprise her if Lady Ellen Allan had gone off with the very person in the world whom Lord Lintern would wish to protect her from. Of this, there was no positive proof, indeed;—yet, from many conversations between the writer and her, it seemed very likely that Lord Lintern's youngest daughter had more than once met the person in question, previous to her visit to Wales;—not that she had ever admitted as much; but his name was constantly in her mouth, along with profuse, if not indecorous, expressions of compassion and sympathy for him; and above all, allusions to his care-worn

and wretched appearance, before his time,—nay to the tones of his voice, so saddened, and so touching from constant and premature sufferings, as Lady Ellen, when put off her guard by the seasonable and necessary remonstrances of her anxious aunt, was in the habit of saying: and how could she describe his person, and his voice, if they had not met, and frequently met? Nay, how could she describe them, in the expressive and peculiar way she did, if those frequent meetings had not inspired her with more, much more than ordinary compassion for her half-cousin, Michael Mutford?—

Lord Lintern, in his heart, had called his maiden sister a fool upon all former occasions that she had occurred to his mind, which, indeed, were not many, nor did they ever happen without setting him a-yawning. Now, however, she was his oracle. Her conclusions seemed wisdom's self. None but women can judge closely and truly of women; and, however absurd in other questions, in this they are downright sagacious. With Michael Mutford, then, his youngest daughter had incontestably eloped.—And under this impression, Lord Lintern's feelings will be imagined.

" And how eloped! in what character! as his wife? even that would be a curse—an eternal curse, and revenge enough for Mutford—But no! he will take a better revenge! having it to his hand, how can he refrain from it!—Not weighing his whole life of burning hatred against me—evinced at his sixteenth year, I believe, in the letter he dared to write me—not weighing that—it is enough to say that he will take the revenge of retaliation!—retaliation for the scene of the other day, in my justice-room—when he saw his designing and depraved sister at my feet!—Ay, I put my trust in him!—I doubt him not!

" And now, *now*"—added Lord Lintern, as his mind looked all around him—" now, at last, am I not a happy and honourable father!"

" That preacher!" he resumed, " after a moment's pause!"—and yielding to a sudden resolve, he inquired at the post-office, Mr. Snow's residence, in the village, and having ascertained it, walked thither rapidly, thundered at the door, and was ushered into the presence of the person he wanted to see.

Mr. Snow was advancing to meet him with his usual polished urbanity, but stopped short

at the almost shocking expression of his visitor's face and manner. Indeed, Lord Lintern's words, and the tone in which he pronounced them, would have been enough to startle him.

"None of that, now, Sir, I pray,"—he began, alluding, with a bitter sneer, to Mr. Snow's gentle and smiling prelude to a kind greeting—"none of that, now, Sir——My daughter!"

"My lord?—Lady Ellen?"

"Yes, Sir—that is the name of *the* daughter I have come to inquire after, at your hands."

"At my hands, Lord Lintern?"

"Tush, Reverend Sir—and tush, to myself"—muttered Lord Lintern—"have I been fool enough to suppose he will admit the receipt of her letter?—Nothing, Sir—nothing—good day, and I pray you to excuse me."—He was leaving the room.

"Stay, Lord Lintern, stay," said Mr. Snow, earnestly, and much affected—"since you have come to see me, do not leave me so soon; you *have* come, in great agitation; and you demand information of your youngest daughter at my hands;—do, now, I beseech you, hear me; whatever information I *can* give, you shall receive, readily, most readily, and, with the most sincere pleasure.—"

"I thank you, Sir, and we shall see that. Have you received a letter from her, this morning?"

"I have, indeed."

"Giving an account of her clandestine elopement from her aunt's house?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Snow, without hesitation.

"Well, Sir;"—Lord Lintern paused; he was reconciling himself to the frankness upon which he had not counted, and trying to think better of Mr. Snow, for it, and also of the whole subject in discussion;—"Well, Sir," he resumed;—"and does Lady Ellen Allan further deem fit to impart to one so deeply in her confidence, why she has taken such a reputable step?"

"Yes; she fully explains her motives."

"And is her confidant at liberty, in his own conscience, and in his own peculiar notions of right and wrong, to communicate her explanation, at second hand, to her own father?"

"Certainly, Lord Lintern, I conceive myself quite free to satisfy you, on this head."

"I am grateful to you and to her, Sir. Pray, have the condescension to go on."

"Lady Ellen thought herself warranted in leaving a house, which did not protect her against the almost hourly attentions of a man whom she could not love—nay, respect; and who lately began to address her, not very graciously:" in using the last word, Mr. Snow expressed, perhaps too mildly, his young correspondent's feelings as to her rich suitor's demeanour.

"Good, Sir. Very good! Was this her only motive?"

"Her chief one, certainly. Without it, she declares she would not have left her aunt's house, although often tempted to do so by the restraint in which she lived, the cheerless seclusion, and, as she conceived and felt, the not affectionate manners of her aunt, to her."

"And she had absolutely no other motive or motives, Mr. Snow?"

"She does not mention any other or others, to me."

"And do you think she would have mentioned them, had they existed?"

"I do, indeed."

"Why are you so sure, Sir?"

"Because, to suppress them, in a letter pro-

fessing to give me all her motives, would have been, though not palpable falsehood, a species of equivocation; and of no species, of no shade of equivocation, Lord Lintern, is your youngest daughter capable."

"What a youthful paragon! And thanks to you, Sir, for making her so."

"I have not made her so, dear Lord Lintern. Nature made her so, as,—capable of being so,—Nature has made us all."

"A fine theory, Mr. Snow; but I have heard it before, and, at length, to-day, though, as you may remember, I once gave you few hopes of going to church to sit out a sermon of yours."

Mr. Snow slightly started, and looked anxiously at Lord Lintern, whose eyes were averted; but after a moment's observation, he, too, turned away his regard, sighing profoundly:—he did not, however, do full justice to his visitor's breast; for, although the cold sneer remained on his lip, Lord Lintern was experiencing, at that instant, a passing twitch of self-accusation for the taunt he had uttered. In spite of his present mood, all the events of that morning, down to the moment of his going

to the Post-office, as well as of the previous day and night, had sunk into him deeper than even he would admit to his own mind.

After a short silence, he went on.

"Pray, Mr. Snow, did Lady Ellen Allan leave her aunt's house *alone?*"

After a moment's hesitation, Mr. Snow answered—"No."

"And in what kind of company, then?"

"In reputable company, Lord Lintern, fit and capable of protecting her."

"Oblige me by naming her kind protectors—or protector."

"On that point, my dear Lord," said Mr. Snow, as frankly as he had made his former admissions,—"on that point I pray you to excuse me."

"Ha! I thought so. And why, on that point, are you to be so readily excused, Sir?"

"Lord Lintern, you know that in removing your daughter to Wales, you commanded her not to return to your own roof, without your own permission; that you assured her, if she did so, your door would be closed against her; she now fears, that you may continue to refuse her your personal protection; that, still, your door is

to be closed against her; and that, if informed of her present place of refuge, you will compel her to return to a roof where—where, in fact, as a lady, as a woman of honour, she thinks she has been insulted by a man with whom she can never join her lot in life:—for these reasons, she requests me, (until you allow me to speak more on the subject, which I hope and pray you may have the kindness to do) to conceal the name of her new friends: but—Lord Lintern, I beseech you let me go on, for, in a few words, I am about to say all *the more* which will be necessary—only authorize me to inform her that you will give her an asylum in your own house, and she will hasten, not only dutifully, but gratefully, and most delighted, to recross its threshold."

"Excellent diplomacy, Sir, between a father and a daughter. And this prostration of parental and rational authority, Mr. Snow, you and your pupil expect me to make, before I can be indulged with an account of the kind of protection under which my youngest daughter has chosen to place herself?—And, in order to make allowance for her elopement from my sister's house, I am to believe the story of that

sister having permitted her to be insulted in that house?—and, if all this I do not, she is to stay where she is, hiding, from my eyes, and from those of the world—though not from *my* thoughts nor *its* tongue, Sir—and you would advise her to just such a course of conduct, Mr. Snow?"

"As yet I have advised her to nothing, Lord Lintern. Her letter of this morning is the first communication that has passed between us—the first information, indeed, I have had of the place to which you had removed her from your own house, since her sudden disappearance from among us, here, in your company."

"Indeed, Reverend Sir?" sneered Lord Lintern.

"Indeed, and in truth, my dear Lord: though I own that my ignorance of how and where Lady Ellen was situated, gave me great uneasiness for the last six or seven months."

"Well, Sir, believing all that, and also that you have not yet begun to advise her, allow me to repeat my question. Supposing that I do not fall into all the terms proposed at,—let me see—between seventeen and eighteen years of age—by her wise, and prudent, and decorous

ladyship—would you, in that case, advise her to continue where she is—(*wherever* she is)—and not return to the protection of her aunt?"

"I am a mere mediator, Lord Lintern, on this occasion; it is not my place to volunteer advice of any kind; but, were Lady Ellen, under those circumstances, to ask my opinion, I certainly could not recommend her to expose herself again, to the unworthy humiliations she has experienced."

"And you fully credit, then, her assertions that she has received cause, from her young suitor, to abandon my sister's home?"

"Fully, Lord Lintern: I repeat, I have the honour, and the heartfelt pleasure of assuring you, that your youngest daughter knows not what it is even to think an untruth."

"All very captivating, Sir. And so, Sir, I am answered, I presume. You positively decline to inform me where that daughter at present is, —or with whom?"

"Under the confidence placed in me by her, my dear Lord, I am bound to do so."

"Then, Sir, one question more, if you please, only one. Have she and a certain young person—young Mutford, Sir!—Michael Mut-

ford!—Have he and she ever met, to your knowledge?—in your company, Sir!—answer that, Reverend Sir."

Mr. Snow saw the results of his answering, but he did answer, at once, and as frankly as ever;—"Yes, Lord Lintern, she and he *have* met, in my company; but——"

"Enough, Sir, add nothing; I know her, now, Sir, and who is likely to be her present protector; and I know you, Mr. Snow! with your smooth cant, and your honied theories, Sir, and after your sermon and all, I know you.—A second time, I wish you a very good day."—he hurried out of the room, Mr. Snow, not deprived of his self-possession, calling upon him, in vain, to stay and hear the circumstances under which his daughter and Michael Mutford had met in his presence.

Lord Lintern walked homeward, hastily. His eyes were fixed on the ground, and he never raised them to notice who passed him, although he was often conscious of persons saluting him in the village, and along the road beyond it, leading to his house. Thus absorbed, he was not aware that one individual, who seemed to have been waiting for him, half way between the village and his residence, on the most lonely

part of the road, pulled off his hat to him in a marked manner, and when Lord Lintern took no notice, followed at a short distance behind, and by stamping heavily, strove to challenge his attention. At last the man came to his side, again pulled off his hat, and wished him good day, by name. Lord Lintern then turned round, and recognized the emancipated *ci-devant* adorer of Lucy Peat.

"Pray, leave me, Sir; I have not time this moment for any reconsideration of your business," said his lordship.

"Reconsideration of *that*, my Lord? I be blowed if it bayn't well considered, already, out and out; Lucy quite the mistress at preacher Boakes's; only, folk say, he beats the worth of it on her sides, every hour in the day." And Sam,—at no time a great respecter of persons, and at present high in his own opinion, by virtue of Mrs. Simmons's private hospitality, ever since an hour before church-hour that morning—Sam, it is asserted, grinned joyously, and almost confidentially, close by Lord Lintern's ear.

"Leave me, I say, Sir—and let me hear no more of the subject."

"Not a word more, my Lord, if preacher

Boakes's hisself were to ax me. It bayn't on that bnsiness at all I make up to your worship; but I hear you've been making inquiries after young Mr. Mutford?"

"Well?—yes—well?"—Lord Lintern stood still, and fixed his glittering eyes on Sam's large, grey, glassy cold ones.

"Your Lordship would consider any one that could help you to find him, *I* know?"

"There—" He gave Sam—a shilling.

"Obleeged to your Lordship's worship;—and Mr. Mutford will be likely to be at a place, in a night or two, where I saw him afore, some months ago: — one Mr. Farmer Linnock's house:—" Lord Lintern started: "the rich farmer as your Lordship sent Lady Ellen to, for the good of her health, you know."

"And you have seen him there, sometime ago, you say? How long ago? answer exactly."

"I be blowed, my Lord, if I can take on me to say so very exactly, but I knows it was the time Lady Ellen was there."

"You are sure?"

"Bayn't *you*, my lord?"

"And why so sure?"

"'Cause I seen Lady Ellen and he, now I

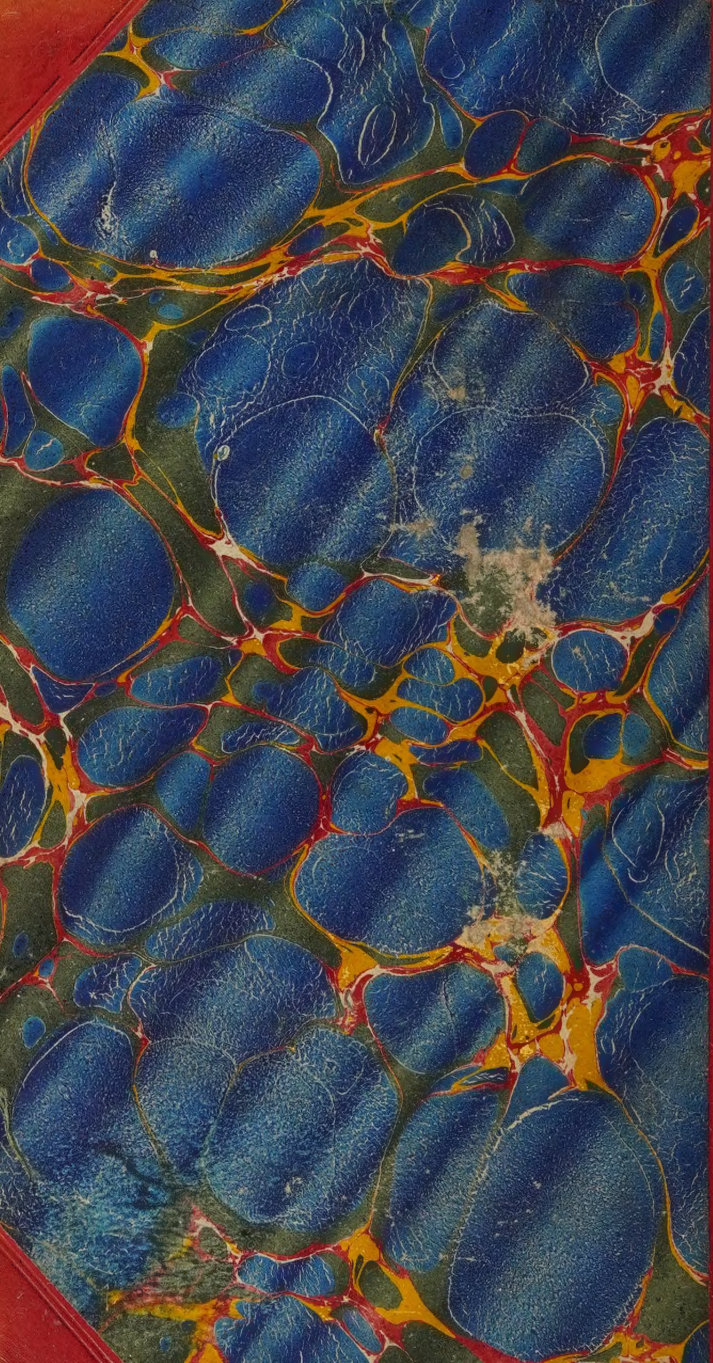
remember, a-talkin' together in the garden and orchard, now in one place, now in t'other."

"Talking together! more than once, then?—how often did he visit at the house?"

"Only for one visit, my Lord; but that was a long un."

"Ay!—but, no matter about that. That's nothing, not the business. I am anxious to see Mr. Mutford, and you are sure he will be at Linnock's, in a night or two? Very well; let me know the moment he arrives there, and I will pay you for your additional trouble; good day."

Lord Lintern gained his deserted and detested home, it is superfluous to say in what resumed hatred and hostility against all those whom, a few hours before, he had been re-inclined to consider in a possibly friendly light.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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